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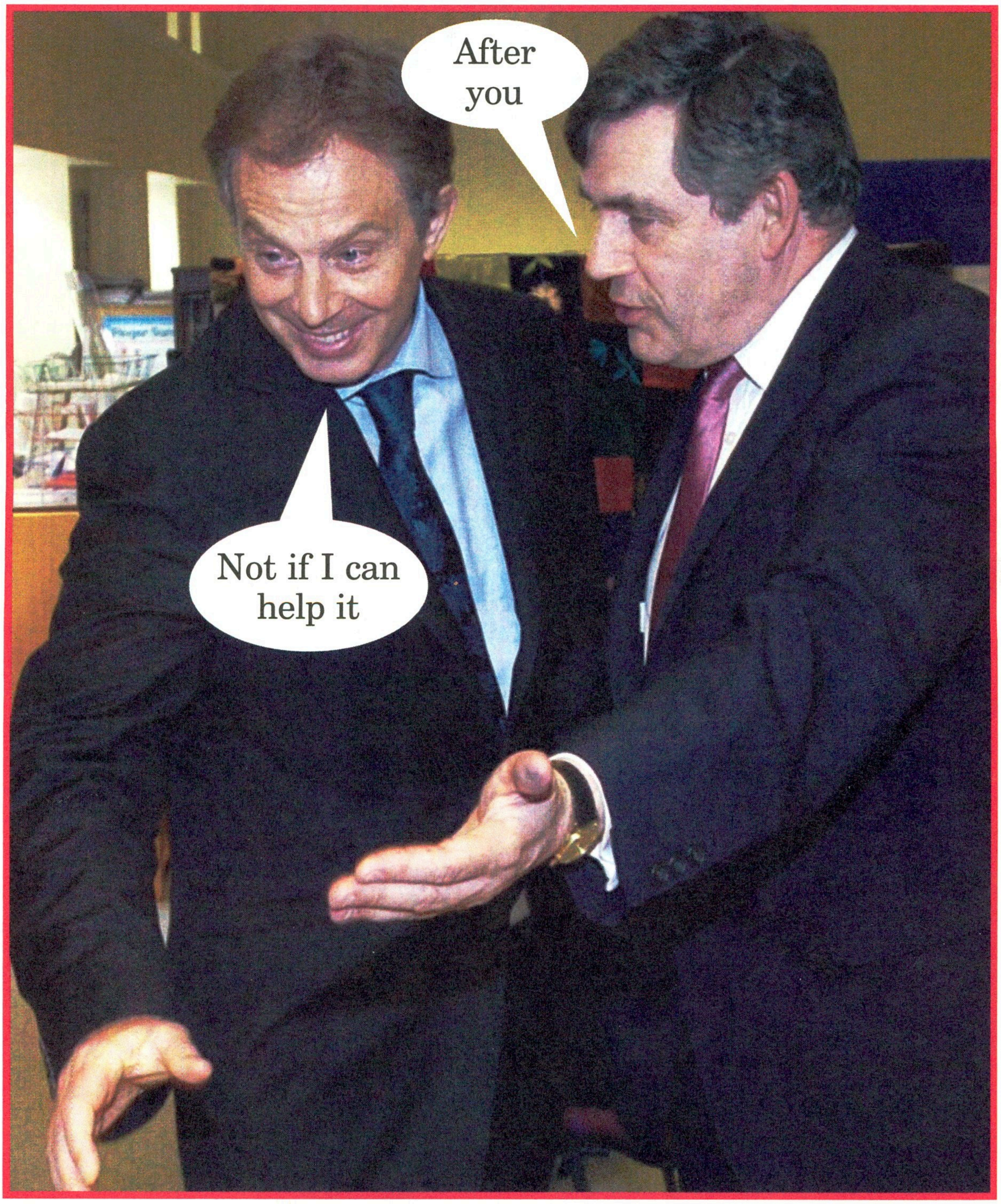
PRIVATE EYE

Inside:
PAUL FOOT
Tribute
Supplement

THE WAR GOES ON



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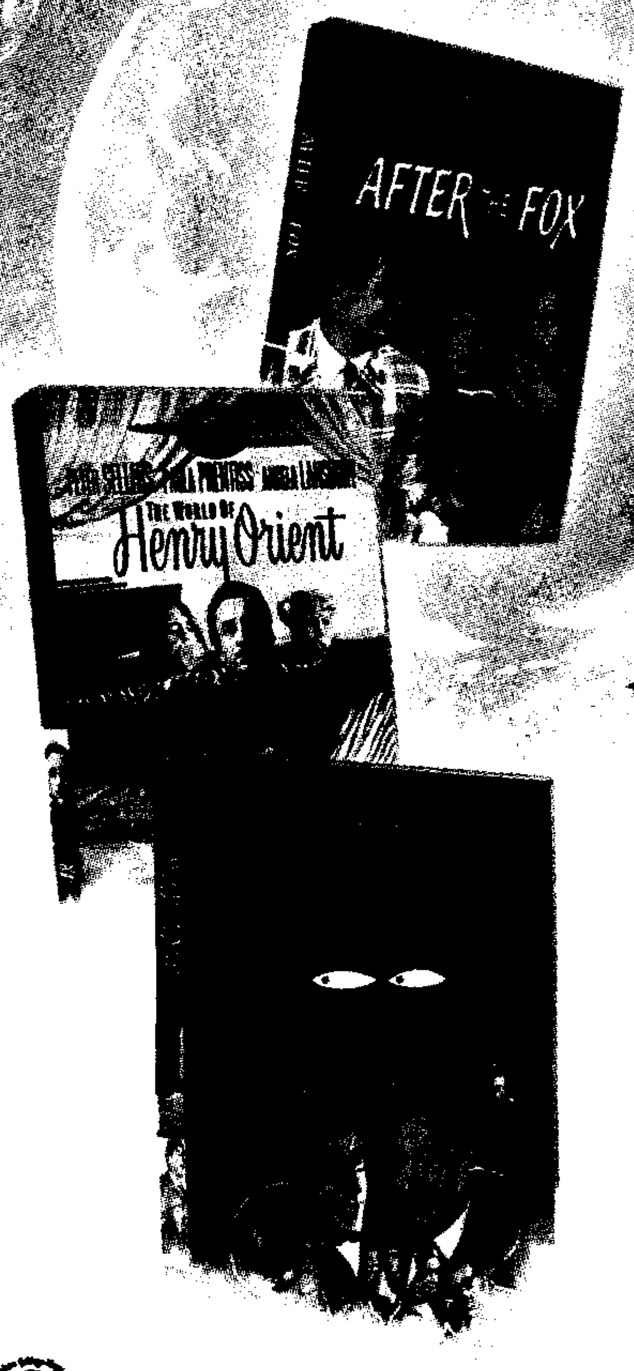

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- **Bill Hagerty on Greg Dyke**
- **Roy Greenslade on Bill Hagerty**
- **Big shake-up at Radio 5 Live**
- **Jane Root's "Me and My Media"**
- **Kelvin MacKenzie on where Roy Greenslade meets Greg Dyke for lunch.**

PLUS

● **What Dawn Airey said to Jane Root when she was having lunch with Greg Dyke, Kelvin MacKenzie, Roy Greenslade and Bill Hagerty. Media Moose reveals all! *Zzzzzzzz*!**

NEW LABOUR SLOGAN

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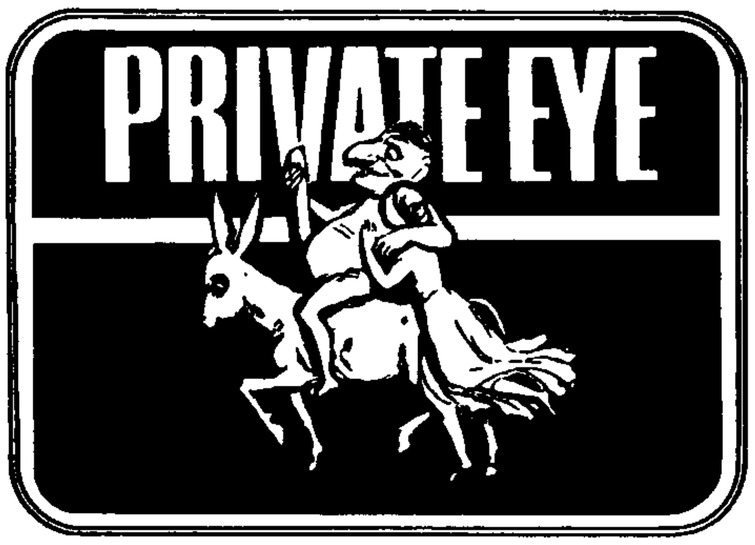

Still crusading
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THE prime minister wanted a debate on Iraq like a hole in the head. Unfortunately the comrades thought differently; and lined one up for conference Thursday – conveniently, say party panjandrums, because the media focus would be on the Hartlepool by-election.

Not that this stopped foreign secretary Jack Straw from trying to browbeat off-message Labour delegates. They want an early date for British troop withdrawal – whereas as Jack spent 45 minutes telling on old comrade that such a demand could only be met if the Iraqi prime minister, Iyad Allawi, asked for it. Since Allawi is hardly going to ask for British troops to be withdrawn, they might be there for a very long time.

UNLIKELY lothario David Blunkett will have to answer awkward questions from MPs about why home office news supremo John Toker was sent to join Mr Blunkett in Tuscany, when news broke of the home secretary's three-year affair with American hostess and *Spectator* publisher Kimberly Fortier.

Backbench MPs aren't happy with the home office's excuse for spending taxpayers' cash on Blunkett's personal affairs – that "even when on holiday the home secretary's security is paramount".

The MPs want to know how much was spent on Toker's five days in the Tuscan hills, what he did and exactly how did his PR skills help with Blunkett's "safety".

JANE GRIFFITHS MP may have been deselected, but her devotion to duty remains unflagging.

"I will not be attending the Labour conference as I have more worthwhile things to do," she claimed in the *Reading Evening Chronicle* last week. "It is great for party members and delegates to have their say, but for constituency MPs like me there is not much point. I have constituency work to do, and drinking warm champagne in hotel rooms in Brighton is not part of that."

Constituency work, eh? Not unless the boundary commission has radically redrawn the map of Reading. As we reported in *Eye* 1114, Griffiths is spending party conference week on a beach in the Aegean, quaffing cold retsina rather than warm champagne.

WHEN Citibank, the world's second largest bank, made a £10m profit in a few minutes last month by dumping billions of government bonds on the London market then buying them back at the inevitably reduced price, the financial services authority (FSA) was quick to launch an investigation.

To mitigate the likely punishment, Citibank's head of global capital markets, Tom Maheras, recently sent a carefully worded memo to 40,000 staff, which was duly leaked to the press and the regulators, showing some contrition and vowing to "ensure that our collective integrity, expertise, and commitment… drive our every action and business decision."

The man at the FSA in charge of regulating the bond markets so profitably exploited by Citibank, is of course Hector Sants. And one of his first decisions at the FSA was to appoint a new director to supervise the trading of banks like Citibank on the London markets. The lucky candidate was Thomas Huertas, managing director of global transaction services at, er, Citibank.

BACK IN July health secretary John Reid put out a press release about MRSA promising "I will fly in experts from countries with low MRSA to advise the NHS on improving infection control".

The statement was reported by every national newspaper and many local ones, with headlines like "NHS looks abroad to fight MRSA" or "foreign legion to battle bugs"; and Reid's announcement certainly took some of the heat off his department as it faced a highly critical report from the national audit office (NAO) which estimated that 5,000 people a year die from MRSA.

Assuming that "flying in" implies speed and urgency, the *Eye* asked how many foreign experts had been invited to help the NHS. Reid's spokesman replied: "No one yet." Asked when it would happen, the *Eye* was told: "There isn't a date". However, the department did promise that "it will happen and is part of work that is ongoing".

So that's all right, then: at least it wasn't just judicious kite-flying to generate headlines that give the impression the government is doing something.

OUTGOING Metropolitan police commissioner Sir John Stevens will not be short of projects to keep him busy after his retirement next January. This month foreign exchange company Travelex announced that it had appointed him as a non-executive director, to take up his post in February.

Stevens has also pledged to continue his work heading two ongoing inquiries which he felt it would be "unfair" to pass on to his successor – one into alleged collusion between loyalist paramilitaries and the security services in Northern Ireland; the other into the deaths of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed, which began this year.

Naturally the fact that one of Travelex's major customers is Harrods, the business headed by Dodi Fayed's father Mohamed, the foremost promoter of the theory that the couple were murdered, in no way compromises Sir John's suitability to continue heading the investigation.

"I found a Cat Stevens album hidden in your cocaine"

PAUL FOOT REMEMBERED
See inside

NEWS

AS THE Chechnya conflict enters its fifth year, the foreign office's annual report on human rights was expected to reflect the growing frustration in the UK and the rest of Europe at Russia's continuing failure to deal with gross human rights abuses, including murder and disappearances, perpetrated by its military.

Last year's report had already predicted that Russia's "failure to curb abuses and prosecute those responsible risks creating a climate of impunity in the republic which in turn could bolster support for extremists such as those responsible for the recent wave of suicide attacks in Chechnya" – as the recent horrific escalation of violence in the Russian Federation might indicate.

However, in the light of the massacre of children in Beslan, foreign secretary Jack Straw has apparently pulled his punches. Not only did he delay publication of this year's report "to allow the people of Russia to focus on their grief and sense of loss" and "to condemn the total culpability of the terrorists responsible", but he apparently decided it was too critical of President Vladimir Putin too.

Although the foreign office confirmed that publication had been delayed, it declined to comment on suggestions that the section on Chechnya is being toned down before being reprinted and published later this year. "We do not want to go into how the report is prepared," said a spokesman.

REPORTS last week that the British ambassador to Rome, Sir Ivor Roberts, had described George Bush as al-Qaeda's "best recruiting sergeant ever" overlooked the diplomat's own clumsy role in strengthening bin Laden's army.

Many of the fanatics who made the pilgrimage to the Bearded One's training camps in Afghanistan in the late 90s were motivated by the apparent indolence of the west – and especially Britain – as Muslims in the Balkans fell victim to Serbian aggression. And the British policy of appeasing the sponsors of ethnic cleansing had no more vigorous advocate than Ivor Roberts, who from 1994 to 1997 served first as chargé d'affaires and then as ambassador in Belgrade.

Roberts boasted of his "closeness of access" and "professional working relationship" with Slobodan Milosevic, but others felt it was perhaps a little too close for comfort. The US envoy in the region, Richard Holbrooke, complained publicly of the ambassador's "excessively pro-Serb" attitude; the *Washington Post* called him Milosevic's "handmaiden". He even acquired the nickname "Ratko Roberts", after the hated Bosnian Serb military chief (now a wanted war criminal).

Such a track record is clearly no obstacle to promotion in the British diplomatic corps. Roberts was rewarded with ambassadorship in Dublin and then Rome – and a knighthood.

AN *EYE* reader who wrote to the *Eye*'s Letters page to criticise the CPPIH, the government body set up to encourage public involvement in the debate about the health service, has been personally threatened with libel proceedings... by the CPPIH.

The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health, which is part of the structure that replaced community health councils (CHCs), is soon to be scrapped by the government but is obviously still very sensitive to criticism.

Undeterred, Malcolm Alexander, a former director of the Association of Community Health Councils and chair of the London Ambulance Service Patients' Forum, has criticised it for being both too secretive and too supine in challenging the NHS.

On a website for the independent Patient and Public Involvement Forum Organisation, he said the commission "has a hopeless inexperienced leadership" (its chair Sharon Grant's background is as a social policy lecturer, councillor and parliamentary secretary to husband Bernie Grant). And in a letter to *Eye* 1108, he said that Grant "is being disingenuous when she claims that the new patient involvement is a success".

"Typical M&S – bad results are so yesterday"

Feathers at the CPPIH were so ruffled by this honest comment that lawyers Hill Dickinson have been engaged and have threatened to "immediately commence a high court action" for defamation against Mr Alexander in person unless he makes a public apology.

It's unusual to go for a letter-writer who cannot afford a lawyer, let alone damages, rather than the magazine or website which published his views. But that's how seriously public involvement in the NHS debate is viewed under "new" Labour.

Number crunching

£1bn Amount government has pledged to paying off debt of poorest nations over next 10 years

£5bn Amount government has already spent on Iraq campaign

Street of Shame

LAST Tuesday's front pages were dominated by two stories: the beheading in Iraq of an American kidnap victim, and the death of Brian Clough. And what tasteful headline did the geniuses at Rebekah Wade's *Sun* produce for their splash on Cloughie? "Bye Bye, Big 'Ead."

Two days later, the *Sun* had the travails of hostage Ken Bigley on pages 4 and 5. Overleaf on page 6, a story about the "axing" of *Coronation Street* stars had mini-portraits of the wretched, unwanted actors… complete with small hatchet-axes adorning each one! Lovely.

SECONDS out, round two. The bout between *Daily Express* night editor Ted Young and his excitable boss Richard Desmond looks as though it could end with a financial bloody nose for the chairman of Express Newspapers.

As reported in the last *Eye*, Dirty Des decked Young with a blow to the chest after learning to his fury that the *Express* hadn't joined the national mourning at the death of his old mate Carl Wayne, a member of Sixties pop band The Move.

In his quest for justice, Young has now engaged the services of the litigation lawyer Keith "Rottweiler" Schilling, whose recent high-profile successes include Naomi Campbell's victory over the *Mirror* and a libel payout for Nicole Kidman from the *Sun*. Rumour has it that Young is hoping for compensation of £250,000 from Dirty Des – or, as he is now known, Desmond Decker.

Meanwhile, the *Express*'s move from the Grey Lubyanka to Ten Lower Thames Street has at last begun, with the circulation department being the first to cross the Thames. "So it's official!" one hack declared. "*Express* circulation is really going down the river!"

Indeed it is. The latest figures suggest that sales of Desmond's flaccid organ are down to 760,000.

THE *New Statesman* preached to its readers in Brighton with a long harangue against the corporate takeover of Labour and its party conference.

What would *Staggers* readers have made of the fact that the mag itself was delivered to Labour big wigs at the Metropole Hotel in a swish bag supplied by the baby milkpowder-maker, Nestlé? Alongside the *New Statesman*, top brass were also given free chocolates, a tube of Polos and a jar of Nescafé, not to mention a heap of corporate bumf from Nestlé, one of the most hated big corporations ever.

THE *Mirror*'s "Bullying: You can stop it" campaign was launched on 13 September with a series of heart-rending stories of youngsters who had taken their own lives after being picked on by classmates.

They included Thomas Thompson, who died last year at the age of 11 after overdosing on painkillers and, according to the paper, "began skipping school because bullies scared him so much".

This was not the conclusion of the coroner, who last December recorded an open verdict and categorically ruled out bullying as a factor in the boy's death. "A full and thorough investigation found no evidence of bullying at school or abuse at home," concluded Christopher Johnson. "He may have been experimenting with the drugs and may not have understood the dreadful effects."

Thompson had in fact refused to attend school for 11 days in protest at the war with Iraq – inspiring MP George Galloway to stick a photograph of the dead boy on his dashboard, claiming that "I think of young Thomas every time I get in the car."

JUST FANCY THAT!

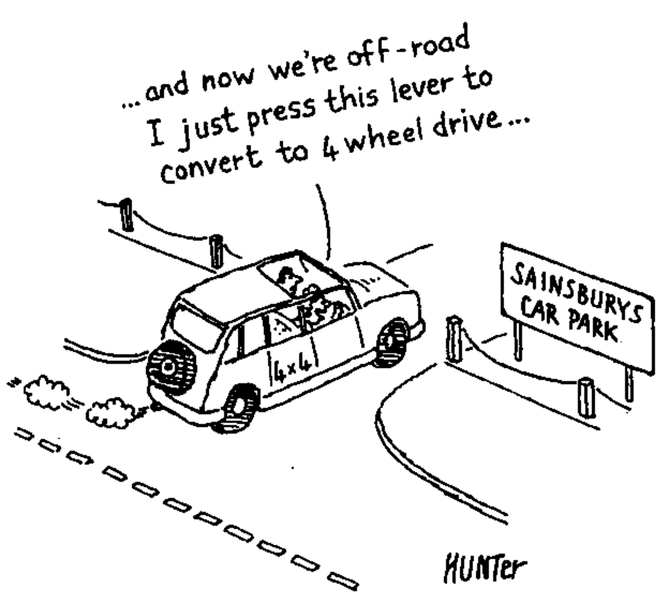
PROFANE typographical gremlins were at work on the Letters page of the Peterborough *Evening Telegraph* on 8 August.

Read the first letter at the beginning of each line... and work out the odds of that happening by chance:

CAN anyone tell me why the council up to now has not been able to give new kitchens to its tenants, but when the properties are transferred to Cross

CAN'T Mr McDowall (Letters, July 28) understand why our vets have a real need to charge £130 for a call out and the consultation? Has he never had a

FOR those of us who remember the undisputed days when steam engines could run faster than the timetable, knocking minutes off journey times,



THE NEOPHILIACS

"Ankles, we are told, are soon to be the new breasts." — Editorial in the *Times*.

"Modesty is the new sex." — *Sunday Times* Style section.

"White is not the new black." — *Sunday Times* Style section.

"Big cardies are the new ponchos. You heard it here first." — *Sunday Times* Style section.

"Giving birth is clearly the new adopting." — *Scotland on Sunday*.

"Is Jamie Theakston the new Bart Simpson?" — *Ariel*.

"Is Virginia Woolf the new Paris Hilton?" — *Sunday Times* Style section.

"Hats: The New Bags." — *Elle* magazine.

THE *Sunday Times* devoted a full page to a hatchet-job on Dr Andrew Wakefield on 12 September, printing a seedy mugshot of him above 1,500 words by Margarette Driscoll musing on how "experts must repair the damage done" by his claims of a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

"The panic has begun to subside," she reported. "Doctors find themselves confronted by patients waving sheaves of 'junk science' printed off the internet less often… it remains to see whether the damage to public confidence can be undone."

Such "junk science" could presumably include the *Sunday Times* article of 3 August 1997 – seven months before Wakefield published his famous research in the *Lancet* – "Crying shame of the vaccination victims", in which one Margarette Driscoll enthusiastically reported on Wakefield's theories and demanded to know whether "children have paid a fearful price for the benefits the vaccination campaign has yielded for the health of the nation?… The potential of vaccines to cause harm in rare instances has long been recognised."

● *See In the Back, page 26*

Number Crunchings

£1.7m

Amount Trinity Mirror gave to ex-editor Piers Morgan not to edit the *Daily Mirror* any more

£400,000

Amount Trinity Mirror gave to ex-acting-editor Des Kelly not to edit the *Daily Mirror* any more

£400,000

Amount Trinity Mirror give editor Richard Wallace to turn up at the office and edit the *Daily Mirror* every day

HACKWATCH

Mary Ann Sieghart

"HAVE we become really nasty?" demanded Mary Ann Sieghart in the *Times* on 16 September. "I only ask because of the level of vitriol I received in other newspapers last week after writing a broadly sympathetic profile of Cherie Blair."

It was indeed broadly sympathetic, in the same way that footballs are broadly spherical. Sieghart wrote that Cherie is "lively company… very popular… highly intelligent, compassionate, conscientious and funny… a thoroughly admirable human being".

But what was "the level of vitriol" heaped on poor Mary Ann? Er, a brief tease from the *Mail*'s Ephraim Hardcastle and an even shorter item in the media diary of the London *Evening Standard*. From these pinpricks, Sieghart concludes that journalism has become "warped". To say "anything remotely nice" about someone is taken as sycophancy. "Only insults, criticism and invective are allowed." It's an "inhumane" and "destructive" attitude, which smacks of "gratuitous unkindness, a trait I deplore" – and produces a "corrosively low level of trust" in public figures.

Luckily, Milly Molly Mary Ann is doing her best to stop the corrosion. Here are a few recipients of her little kindnesses this year…

"If **Tony Blair** or **Michael Howard** held executive jobs in the private sector, they would have lost them by now. In senior posts you have to be good at people management, and both party leaders have proved in their reshuffles that they are woefully bad at it" (10 September).

Blair, she reveals, "is not quite the moral paragon that he thinks he is" (22 April). Nor is he very bright, as proved by his "half-witted" proposal to introduce random drug-testing in schools. "I had hoped that the prime minister had managed to kick the habit of pandering to the prejudices of whichever tabloid he graced with his next interview. I was sadly deluded" (25 February).

Howard, meanwhile, is "low-down and nasty in the Commons" (11 February) – and a shameless wife-stealer. "I'm glad that an interviewer has at last punctured the romantic bubble surrounding Michael Howard's wooing of his wife, Sandra," Sieghart rejoiced on 8 July, congratulating Fern Britton for having the nerve "to point out that Sandra was married to another man at the time. I have no idea what state her marriage was in, but I know that I would find it rather less than romantic if another woman tried to seduce and steal my husband."

Howard's predecessors are no better. "**Mrs T** was discord personified" (1 July). **John Major** made "portentous speeches" in a "querulous voice" (24 July). **Sir Edward Heath** is "an embittered old man who can take pleasure only in vilifying [his] successors" (31 March).

Mary Ann has little time for **Peter Mandelson**, "whose narcisissm is legendary" (8 July). And she warns readers that **David Blunkett** "has a prickly side to his nature… he is easily offended and quickly loses his temper" (18 August). **Ken Livingstone** "is, frankly, barmy" (20 May), and his mayoral rival **Steve Norris** was irredeemably "tainted" by his "truly breathtaking brazenness" in taking the chairmanship of Jarvis. "Does he really not give a toss about possible conflicts of interest? Well, I do" (10 June).

As she has reminded us, Mary Ann hates gratuitous unkindness. Except, presumably, when it's aimed at **Lord Black**. "I found him insufferably arrogant and pompous each time I met him… I for one find his current embarrassment almost as cheering as that of Jeffrey Archer when he came a cropper" (2 September).

Even Mary Ann's own father, the distinguished human rights lawyer **Paul Sieghart**, doesn't escape. He was "not the greatest parent in many ways", she revealed on 14 May. Two months later we were treated to more details: "I can vividly recall, as a child, being spanked so hard by my father on a summer holiday that my bum was covered in bruises. The next day, I wore my briefest swimming costume to the beach so that everyone could see how cruel he had been" (8 July).

Is there anyone, other than Cherie, who *doesn't* have feet of clay? Step forward, "the phenomenon that is **Bill Clinton**". After talking to him at his book launch, Sieghart revealed (1 July) that he was "animated, but not – to my surprise – overtly lecherous. Far from patronising [women], he talks to them on exactly the same intellectual level as men. The subliminal message is: 'You've got a great brain as well as great (fill in as appropriate).' And he looks them in the eye, not the cleavage. No wonder women find him so attractive."

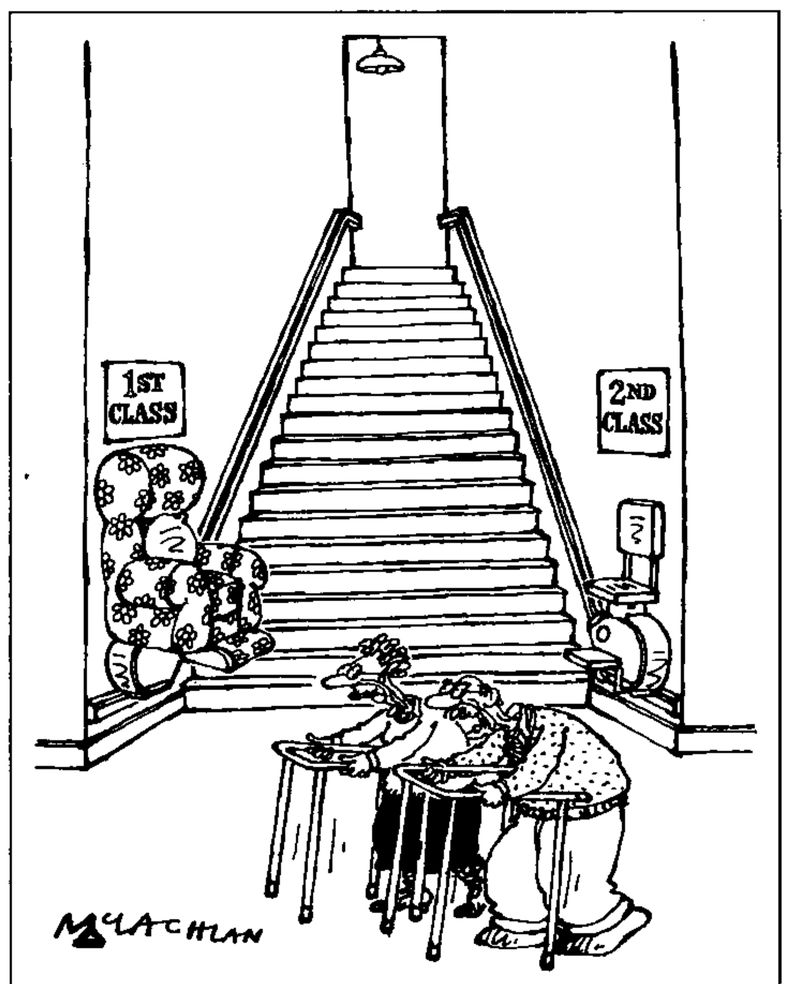
A man best remembered for insisting that "I did not have sex with that woman Miss Lewinsky" may seem an odd hero for a columnist who deplores the corrosively low level of trust in politicians. The lesson for other public figures who want Sieghart's approval is obvious. Behave as badly as you like, lie by all means, but *don't stare at her cleavage*.

AD NAUSEAM

LONDON mayor Ken Livingstone has announced that bus and tube fares will rise by up to 20 percent to fund improvements to the capital's transport. But there's another reason for the increases – and it has nothing to do with improving the service.

In the next three months Transport for London (TfL) will donate £8.4m worth of advertising space at more than 50,000 underground sites and on 40 double-decker buses, to the "Back the Bid" campaign for the 2012 Olympics. If the bid succeeds, all well and good: TfL would then get billions to update London's creaking system and commuters could expect to benefit as a result. But if it doesn't, that's another £8.4m Ken's tossed away.

Add that to a transport budget deficit of £150m, and Livingstone's promise that fares will not increase over the rate of inflation in the next four years seems gleefully unattainable.



"I'll never get used to the class discrimination in this residential home"

TRANSPORT secretary Alistair Darling is poised any day now to announce the highly controversial route for a new major road to the south-west. But which way will he jump?

Government policy is to avoid destroying areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) for the sake of the car where a viable alternative route exists. So the decision should be a no-brainer. One option would cut a dual carriageway through Somerset's ancient Blackdown Hills – an area of both outstanding natural beauty and sites of special scientific interest – to the M5 at Exeter. The second would be to upgrade the alternative A358 to join the motorway at Taunton, which to conservationists isn't ideal but is far less destructive.

But there has been powerful lobbying from the business community and politicians in Devon, particularly Exeter, who see the Blackdown Hills route bringing with it economic growth which might otherwise go to its nearest rival, Taunton.

But never fear. The department for environment, foods and rural affairs (Defra) has it own minister with special responsibility for protecting bio-diversity, SSSIs and areas of outstanding natural beauty. Step forward Ben Bradshaw, Labour MP for… Exeter!

MULTICULTURALISM and support for animal welfare are both sacred articles of faith for "new" Labour – so what happens when they come into conflict?

If George "Respect" Galloway is to successfully challenge Blair babe Oona King in Bethnal Green and Bow at the general election, he must pick up as many Muslim votes as he can. So he is seeking to exploit the MP's opposition to the ritual slaughter of animals for halal meat in an attempt to garner support from Muslims, many of whom are already angry with King over her backing for the Iraq war.

Galloway told the *East London Advertiser* that many Labour MPs put the treatment of animals before the religious feelings of Muslims. "I would be very glad to open up a debate on this issue," he said. Oona King and Poplar MP Jim Fitzpatrick – with more than 70,000 Muslim constituents between them – have both said that halal and kosher slaughter are cruel, though Fitzpatrick is inclined to wobble if questioned too closely on the issue.

Last year a report by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) recommended a ban on ritual slaughter after finding that animals suffered severe trauma and could take two minutes to bleed to death. But earlier this year junior Defra minister Ben Bradshaw indicated that keeping religious minorities happy came before animal welfare for the government. "We will not ban the production of halal and kosher meat," he said.

At least West Ham MP Tony Banks, who has thousands of Muslim constituents and is also likely to face an election challenge from Respec', knows where he stands. "I don't think it's a humane way of killing," he says. "I'm opposed to ritual slaughter." Galloway, meanwhile, is sharpening his knife...

LABOUR MPs are aghast at the news that affable Alan Howarth, secretary of the parliamentary Labour party, is to be replaced by Fiona Gordon, an old bruiser and arm-twister from the Labour whips' office.

While Howarth spends his leisure hours rambling and compiling obituaries of fallen Old Labour comrades, Gordon is from the Hilary Armstrong, Labour whips' office thumbscrew tendency. So no more larking about for off-message Labour MPs!

IN THE battle for Peter Mandelson's old seat in Hartlepool, Labour is concentrating its fire on the Liberal Democrat candidate, local lawyer Jody Dunn.

Claims that she described locals as "either drunk, flanked by an angry dog or undressed" have received much press coverage courtesy of Labour-issued pamphlets.

Last week Labour's campaign manager and MP for nearby Houghton and Washington East, Fraser Kemp, levelled an even more serious accusation at the Lib Dem. "Jody Dunn gives a Hartlepool address on her nomination form, but she has stretched the bounds of credibility," he thundered. "If 'Jody-come-lately' is really living in the town, she should prove it."

Quite right too. While Dunn works from an office in Hartlepool, her family home is in a village 25 miles away.

That Peter Mandelson represented the constituency while rather famously residing in a £475,000 flat 260 miles away in London's Notting Hill in no way undermines Labour's argument.

MICHAEL HOWARD's new shadow cabinet appointments of John Redwood and David Cameron were seen as a lurch to the right. But will they find the time to change the party's politics?

Cameron is a director of bar operator Urbium plc, which since 2002 has been trying to open one of its huge "Tiger Tiger" clubs to fill with 1,700 drinkers in Nottingham. The local council turned down its entertainment licence application, so Urbium went to the crown court. Evidence from the local police chief constable made it lose the appeal.

This contrasts with Michael Howard's recent attack on Labour's licensing "gimmicks" and his promise to let councils have more power over licensing to stop Britain's binge-drinking problems.

Meanwhile John Redwood chairs the advisory board of the temp workers' firm, the Corporate Services Group. Trading as Blue Arrow, it supplies nurses, cleaners and domestics to the NHS. Under the "Medacs" brand the firm also supplies locum doctors to the NHS, prisons and police service. Presumably Redwood will remind MPs of his job next time he talks about getting rid of government employees in favour of using private employers.

Redwood is also a director of BNB Resources, a job-advertising firm. While he loudly complains about the large number of public sector jobs Gordon Brown creates, his firm makes a profit… advertising those same jobs.

AT LEAST one person thinks the Inland Revenue and Customs got a good deal when they sold their property estates to a tax haven company three and a half years ago under the "STEPS" contract.

Jamie Hopkins, chief executive of Mapeley, the group that bought the buildings, boasts in a special *Financial Times* property supplement that the government "transferred all of the property risk and had cost certainty" under the contract.

Either Mr Hopkins is losing his grip on reality or he is glossing over the enormous problems with the STEPS deal in the hope of persuading other organisations to hand their buildings to one of his offshore companies. (Mapeley, after all, has not won a single further contract since the STEPS deal, for reasons obvious to anyone who read Paul Foot's special report, *The Artful Dodgers*, in issue 1080 last year.)

When the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) questions the new chairman of the Inland Revenue, David Varney, on the controversial deal next month, its members may ask whether he considers that he has "cost certainty". If he has, perhaps he could tell everyone else (ie taxpayers) what the true cost is of flogging off so many public assets to a tax haven company.

"The Speaker thinks it more in keeping"

TONY BLAIR and his home secretary David Blunkett have warned MPs to be extra vigilant in the face of the terrorist threat. Some, clearly, need to wake up.

Shona McIsaac, Labour member for Cleethorpes, spotted a group of hunt protesters hanging around in the committee corridor minutes before they stormed into the Commons chamber.

She told the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph*: "As I turned to go down the corridor I saw these suspicious-looking men. They were all wearing yellow jackets and white hard hats and looked a bit peculiar. I thought it a bit odd at the time because they didn't look like your average construction worker.

"I squeezed past and went down the stairway but they were still standing around looking into the committee rooms. They kept saying to each other "what about this one, or what about that one… But it wasn't until I saw the press coverage of the Commons invasion that I though anything of it." Well spotted, Shona!

Meanwhile, if the waiter who served breakfast and lunch to Brian White, Labour MP for Milton Keynes North East, looked familiar, the MP thought nothing more of it. *Sun* hack Anthony France, who got a job as a Commons waiter using false references and then smuggled in a dummy "bomb", worked on the *Milton Keynes on Sunday* paper before moving to Wapping. White had encountered him a number of times and had particular reason to remember France, as in 2000 the hack had revealed that White's stepson had a heroin problem.

France even risked blowing his cover by asking "Don't I know you from somewhere?" as he served White his lunch, but the penny still failed to drop for the dozy member for Milton Keynes.

THE UK Independence Party holds its AGM this weekend, and following its success in the European elections the leadership is determined to show what a thoroughly sane and respectable bunch they now are – even if the presence of Robert Kilroy-Silk would seem to suggest otherwise.

As the UKIP website boasts: "In order to protect the party from infiltration by extremists… all prospective parliamentary candidates and constituency office bearers must sign declarations confirming that they have no criminal record, no record of serious mental illness and *no previous association with extremist political groups of right or left*."

No doubt this will come as a surprise to Martyn Heale, chairman of the fast-growing UKIP branch in South Thanet. Heale, a sometime prison officer at Wormwood Scrubs, was previously a branch organiser and council candidate for the National Front.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

SACKED EU whistle-blower Dougal Watt has uncovered another unusual arrangement being investigated in a European institution (see *Eyes passim*). This time it's at the EU's publications office.

Watt has discovered that Sylvie Tarizzo-Thonier, a publications office official, was a founder, manager and shareholder of a company partly-owned by one of the EU's contractors.

EU information is complex but potentially valuable. Certain details about contracts, grants, subsidies or European law, for example, are worth a lot to the right people. Mme Tarizzo-Thonier, it has emerged, was a founder director of Luxembourg-registered Access Technologies SARL, which is part-owned by Tecsys Infopartners and is now listed as working from the latter's headquarters.

Tecsys InfoPartners' work with the EU includes running the "Tenders Electronic Daily ALERT", an electronic service that points subscribers to what it calls "1,000 billion euros worth of contracts a year", all drawn from EU files.

Thomas Cranfield, director-general of the publications office, tells the *Eye* that Mme Tarizzo-Thonier was investigated when "an internal audit threw up the directorship". He is satisfied that "the companies are dormant and there is no conflict of interest". But to check there was no past conflict, he referred the issue to the EU's useless anti-fraud office, Olaf.

Tarizzo-Thonier became a full-time EU official in November 2002, so she should have ended her relationship with the firms on that date. Luxembourg business records show that Access Technologies filed accounts in May 2003, but the accounts themselves are not available. The picture before Nov[illegible] is less clear, because European [illegible] officials often seconds staff from their [illegible] EU "representatives". So while Tarizzo-Thonier was employed directly by the EU, she was described as being a publications office official in charge of its electronic legal databases in 1997 and 2001.

The Olaf investigation will cover these years, although Cranfield said that any investigation would depend on Olaf's "own evaluation of priorities". Don't hold your breath.

DEFENCE NEWS

THE MoD's long list of procurement disasters is headed by the Eurofighter, which is late, over budget and currently due to enter service with a gun that can't be fired – not bad at nearly £80m an aircraft. But things are no better for trainee pilots at the other end of the scale.

Five years ago the MoD chose the German-built Grob Tutor over its British competitor, the Slingsby Firefly, as the RAF's elementary trainer, the first aircraft student pilots fly. Both Slingsby and Grob were in dire trouble at the time; and the German firm was already posting out redundancy notices when, to its utter amazement, the UK government decided to save its bacon instead of Slingsby's.

The wisdom of the decision was illustrated on 29 June this year when a propeller fell off a Grob Tutor mid flight, nearly claiming the lives of an RAF instructor and student and forcing the MoD to ground the entire fleet.

While checks and modifications were carried out on the Grobs over the summer, RAF students had to sit around doing nothing much. At RAF Wyton, two squadrons worth of students and instructors could only gaze misty-eyed across the apron to the neighbouring civilian flying club which was fully operational – its Slingsby Fireflies flying merrily around the skies.

FRESH from its sterling work in "reconstructing" Iraq, Halliburton is in danger of altering "the effectiveness of the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent" thanks to delays in fixing Britain's nuclear submarines.

The ministry of defence (MoD) confirmed to the *Eye* that Halliburton-run Devonport naval base is almost a year behind in refitting the Trident-carrying nuclear submarine, HMS Vanguard. The Halliburton dockyard has already been condemned for long delays and £199m in extra costs. Completion dates for the sub repair slipped from "the third quarter of 2004 to the second quarter of 2005", although the MoD claimed this was "not an extensive delay".

However, the national audit office (NAO) said in its 2002 report on Devonport docks that delay in completing the refit could hamper the effectiveness of the UK's nuclear deterrent. The NAO was also concerned about any "delays to the programme of submarine refit work" because "this programme is itself tight".

Because Vanguard is still stuck in the docks, CND has discovered that the next nuclear submarine needing attention, HMS Victorious, is stuck out at sea with radiation levels building in its reactor, pumps and piping.

Legal News

AFTER a four-year review the Law Society, the governing body for solicitors, has finally tightened up the rules governing conflicts of interest.

Lawyers will now be automatically forbidden from acting for two clients on the same matter. Nor will they be allowed to act for two clients on different cases, where doing the best for one might prejudice the interests of the other.

The rules, which will come into force shortly, will close the loophole that led to complaints over the attempts of City law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer's attempt to advise retail tycoon Philip Green on his recent takeover bid for Marks & Spencer. The move was blocked in the high court once it emerged that Freshfields had previously acted for M&S.

The review was announced back in 2000 by Law Society past president Michael Napier, who is himself being investigated by the Law Society over allegations of… conflicts of interest. The case involves Michael Ford, a barrister who complains that he was sacked, abused, bankrupted and ruined by his former client, the gargantuan multinational Exxon.

Eye readers may recall how Exxon pursued him with a vengeance after he refused to conceal vital documents from a coroner who was investigating two deaths in an explosion at a Hong Kong power station, owned and managed by Exxon subsidiaries. Many people were injured.

As part of extensive litigation in the US, Hong Kong and the UK (see *Eyes* 1082 and 1083) in January this year, Ford submitted a petition to the privy council. In it he alleged that Napier had acted for him in proceedings against Exxon companies, while his firm, Irwin Mitchell, was also acting in a substantial case in the UK for Esso, another Exxon subsidiary.

Ford's petition claimed that his case in the UK courts had been hampered because his legal team, instructed by Napier, did not mention a key issue in the case – that Exxon was intimidating his witnesses. Unfortunately for Ford, the privy council registrar wrote to say that while he had "every sympathy" with Ford, the council no longer had jurisdiction over Hong Kong courts. The petition formed the basis of a complaint to the Law Society.

Napier has always maintained that while Ford was represented by Irwin Mitchell, "he always received independent and impartial advice consistent with our professional obligations". Any tightening of those "professional" rules will not now help Ford, however, as they are not retrospective.

DOWN ON THE FARM

A RECENT Channel Four *Dispatches* programme unwittingly illustrated the old truth that, if a government issues a stupid law which prevents honest folk from making a living, sooner or later somebody will try to find a way round that law.

The programme sought to expose Britain's fast-growing "black economy" in selling illegally slaughtered meat to butchers and restaurants. But it did not explain why such a trade should suddenly have sprung up in recent years.

The reason lies in the crazy policy pursued since 1990 by Maff/Defra which has resulted in the closure of three-quarters of Britain's slaughterhouses. The excuse claimed by British ministers, from John Gummer onwards, was that they were implementing European commission (EC) hygiene rules.

It is true that part of the problem was the cackhanded, costly way they agreed to impose the continental system of meat inspection by vets on top of the traditional British system that relied on meat inspectors. But equally damaging was that, in the name of the single market, the EC wanted to squeeze all abattoirs into the same regulatory straitjacket. In the name of "EC export rules", it forced hundreds of smaller slaughterhouses to adopt "structural standards" originally designed to apply only to huge "factory abattoirs" which mass-produce meat for supermarkets and burger bars.

Inevitably hundreds of firms closed because they could not afford the vast sums needed to comply with regulations inappropriate to their type of business (and which had nothing to do with promoting safer meat). This left large areas of Britain without a slaughterhouse, creating big difficulties for farmers and butchers (and serious animal welfare problems). Hence the growth in recent years of the new "black economy" in illegally slaughtered meat.

Rather than explain that this is the sort of thing which inevitably happens when governments issue daft laws, it was much easier for *Dispatches* simply to blame the butchers and farmers behind the "racket". But there is now a further twist to the story.

Until now the only partial exemption from the EC rules has been for tiny "low throughput" abattoirs, serving local farmers and butchers (which produce a good deal of Britain's highest-quality meat, beloved of professional "foodies"). As late as 1999, according to the great Lord Whitty, 190 "low throughput" red-meat slaughterhouses had somehow survived in England, but by 2003 this had fallen to 141. Now the European commission has ruled that the "low throughput" exemption is to be abolished.

Any small slaughterhouses still in business will have to pay out hundreds of thousands of pounds to put them on a par with the largest industrial abattoirs (most of which received masses of public money in the 1980s to reach "EC export standard"). Since these tiny businesses cannot afford such huge sums, it looks as though, within two years, all the remaining tiny local abattoirs will have to close.

Brussels and Defra will at last have achieved their goal. Some of the best-quality meat still on the market will no longer be available. And the only people rejoicing will be the supermarkets.

'Muckspreader'

"Seems to me that great white whale do torment ye on purpose, Cap'n Ahab"

EDUCASHUN...

THE FUTURE is looking shakier than ever for Jarvis, purveyor of pisspoor private finance initiative (PFI) projects.

Norfolk county council is rapidly losing patience with Jarvis' inability to deliver the £263m worth of PFI buildings in more than 30 schools that it committed to when chosen as "preferred bidder" on the deal last December. Ten months on no contract has yet been signed.

Under the proposed deal Jarvis, like many PFI companies, wouldn't actually get its hands dirty by building the schools. Its job would simply be to manage the project and provide services such as caretaking for the next 25 years. But in the crazy world of PFI, the schools have to be owned by Jarvis, which would arrange and pay for their construction and then lease them back to the council under a "service agreement".

So atrocious is Jarvis's recent track record, however, that RG Carter, the local construction firm that should have been building the schools (and relying on Jarvis to get paid), appears to have developed cold feet.

The builders agreed in principle to do the work back in December. But since then Jarvis has been heavily criticised for failing to pay its contractors on time, culminating in a BBC *Money Programme* special exposing the scandal earlier this year. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, RG Carter now finds that it is, er, unable to agree final terms and has pulled out of the work.

Norfolk council has set a deadline of early October for Jarvis to find a new builder. If it doesn't, the PFI deal will probably collapse, just as a similar Jarvis deal with Fife council did last month.

This latest Jarvis fiasco is embarrassing for Conservative-controlled Norfolk council, which was given £92m in PFI credits for the scheme by the government, and for Tory councillor Alec Byrne in particular. When Jarvis was chosen for the project last year, he promised it would "sound the death knell for many mobile classrooms" and reassured sceptical parents: "We are aware of issues [with Jarvis] in previous contracts and are confident that we have taken them into account in planning our scheme in Norfolk."

But it seems that Norfolk schoolchildren will be stuck in their leaky prefabs for a while yet.

PS: Days after this debacle emerged, Norfolk county council announced a shortlist for a contract to build five new primary schools. PFI was again the natural choice as the council will receive further government bribes not available for any other form of procurement, aka PFI credits, of £60m. Jarvis wasn't on the shortlist.

FURTHER EDUCASHUN...

THERE'S a sense of déjà vu at Lancaster University, where a second phase of new student accommodation provided by Jarvis University Partnerships Programme isn't ready for students arriving for freshers' week.

Last November *Eye* 1094 reported on the shoddy state of the same university's new Jarvis-built Graduate College, with its flooding showers, miswired lighting and loose guttering.

Students due to start at Lancaster's Lonsdale College may finally be in their rooms in six weeks' time – when they will face staggering charges of £73.50 a week, compared to £53.20 in the old days when halls were university-run.

In fact going private means paying more across the board, as demonstrated by the charges sheets that warn students how much it will cost them if they break or lose anything.

Packs given out to new undergraduates contain the sheets for both university and Jarvis halls and can be placed side-by-side for easy comparison. For a lost dustpan and brush the university charges a fairly pricy £5 – but Jarvis wants £12. For a missing ironing board, £20 becomes £30; while the £10 fine for leaving blu-tack on the walls rockets to £25. And so on... for almost every single item on the list.

EVEN FURTHER EDUCASHUN...

LITTLE-KNOWN author, aching for academic recognition but having trouble being taken seriously? Wish someone would write a learned thesis on your work? There's no need to wait any longer – simply write the thesis yourself!

That has been the brilliant wheeze of Graham Joyce, a fantasy /sci-fi author from Leicester who, despite having nine novels under his belt, winning the British Fantasy Prize four times and having been described by the *Grauniad* as "the Magus of the Midlands", has yet to become a household name. He has been awarded a PhD by Nottingham Trent University for his penetrating 140,000-word study of *Smoking Poppy*, a novel about Thai drug smugglers published in 2001 by... Graham Joyce.

By another extraordinary coincidence, Joyce happens to teach an MA course in creative writing at Nottingham Trent. The university has defended the award of a PhD to one of its own lecturers for a study of his own book by saying he had to follow the same procedures as other candidates and was marked by two external examiners.

Joyce told the *Nottingham Evening Post*: "This was not about the book and why I wrote it or how it was good or bad. It was about the process I went through writing it, how I got there. What an author goes through to write a book. I took the book apart and the interesting thing for me..." [cont. p94.]

A wonderful idea, which will certainly catch on. Only one nagging thought remains: what if he had hadn't passed?

"Of course I have to drive him to school in a people carrier, he won't fit into anything else"

PENSION NEWS

THAT there is one pension rule for fat cats and another for everyone else couldn't be more clearly demonstrated than at failed pensions company Britannic Group.

It recently gave up selling pensions, having failed to recover from the miss-selling scandal of the 1990s (for which it was fined £525,000) and now simply runs closed funds. But, when it comes to telling porkies about pensions for its own people, Britannic still knows a thing or two.

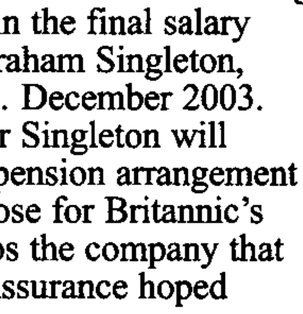
Like many struggling companies, in 2002 Britannic decided to cut the costs of providing pensions for staff. In an all too familiar move, it closed its "final salary" pension scheme (under which pensions are linked to an employee's final earnings) to all new employees from October 2002. Anyone starting at the firm after that date would go into the cheaper and riskier "money purchase" scheme. Or at least that's what Britannic said it was doing.

A close reading of the company's 2003 report, however, reveals that one man joining the firm after October 2002 was luckier than most. Among the board members who are in the final salary scheme is finance director Graham Singleton, who joined the company in... December 2003.

As a qualified actuary, Mr Singleton will appreciate how valuable his pension arrangement is, especially compared to those for Britannic's other new employees. Perhaps the company that used to be called Britannic Assurance hoped nobody would notice.

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC2
Anne Robinson: The Hallelujah Chorus occurs in which oratorio by Handel?
Contestant: The Sound Of Music.
Robinson: What is the more common name given to the government department "Military Intelligence Six"?
Celebrity hairdresser: MI5.



Radio 1, early morning show
Presenter: How many toes would three people have in total?
Contestant: 23.

BBC Radio Solent, the Nick Girdler Show
Girdler: I'm looking for an island in the Atlantic Ocean whose name includes the letter "e".
Contestant: Ghana.
Girdler: No, listen. It's an *island* in the *Atlantic*.
Contestant: New Zealand.

SOCIAL SERVICE?

WITH 78,000 children in institutional care in Britain, the need for good foster homes is greater than ever. Nevertheless, the fostering decisions of some social service departments appear downright bizarre.

The experience of Family A in the west Midlands is a case in point. They have a 19-year-old foster son who, in an attempt to publicise the benefits of being fostered, spoke publicly and glowingly recently about the help he has received. Aged 18, after six years with the couple he called mum and dad, he took their name and regarded them as his family.

In the very same week, however, his younger foster brother, aged 14, who had been with the family continuously for six years and also called his foster parents mum and dad, was removed from their care and put back into an institution by Sandwell social services.

The child himself, through an independent advocate from the National Children's Home, said he was "very happy" with his foster carers and had enjoyed travelling between his home and South Africa but was worried and insecure because he feared he might be moved because of the overstay. Not only has the authority moved him, however, but his foster carers have now been forbidden any contact with him too. Said the foster father: "After six years that is a cruel thing to do to any child. We are shattered by this."

The boy's brother, who was anxious the child be reunited with the couple, told the *Eye* he believed his younger brother was the victim of a disagreement between his foster carers and social services. "I cannot believe this has been done with his best interests in mind."

Sandwell, asked why it had taken such a draconian step, said: "We cannot discuss individual cases involving children and young people. However, we can say categorically that any action we take in such situations takes full account of the best interests of the child, while fulfilling our legal obligations and responsibilities to the child and others involved."

MEDIA NEWS

HACKS at *Panorama* were simultaneously horrified and helpess with laughter when they read the new "creative brief" for the programme, leaked to the *Guardian* on Monday.

The document, prepared at the behest of current affairs supremo Peter Horrocks, was so full of "blue-sky-thinking" babble that it could have been written by that master of the genre, Lord Birt: "*Panorama* should move from an image of distant informer to that of active agent. It should move from a remote, pedestal position of 'lecturer' to a 'touch it, reach it, feel it' guide…" What this means is that *Panorama* should ditch investigative journalism and go for "human interest, emotional" interviews conducted by Fiona Bruce, in the spirit of ITV's pisspoor *Tonight* or indeed *Richard & Judy*.

Most hilarity was provoked by the suggestion that *Panorama* could increase both its "topical relevance" and its ratings by, er, "linking issues to [storylines from] *EastEnders*". Is the half-witted apparatchik who wrote the document also the only person in the BBC (or indeed Britain) not to have noticed that *EastEnders* is in meltdown, savaged by critics and rejected by viewers for its increasingly absurd and overextended storylines? Last Tuesday's episode had the lowest audience *ever*, prompting the resignation of *EastEnders*' executive producer Louise Berridge.

The BBC says Berridge will remain at the corporation, working on "other projects". Such as? Nervous BBC hacks are waiting to see if *Panorama* suddenly takes an interest in the dangers of poorly built "dragon slides" in East London squares, or the enduring mystery of the whereabouts of Dirty Den.

GOING LIVE

COVERING the appalling story of the British hostage Kenneth Bigley held in Iraq, *Newsnight*'s Jeremy Paxman went live to Nicholas Witchell in Baghdad.

Paxman: What's the latest, Nick?

Witchell: Jeremy, there really is no latest, other than what you've already reported.

8.0 PREVIEW **Betrayed By New Labour** (T) Greg Dyke presents a personal examination of the Hutton affair, which led to his resignation as director general of the BBC. *3242*

9.0 FILM **Get Over It** (Tommy O'Haver, 2001) (T) It's tough breaking up.

Grauniad

THE unavoidable Simon Cowell is currently the subject of legal action by his ex-colleague Simon Fuller, who has accused his ITV show *X-Factor* of ripping-off the near-identical *Pop Idol* programme the pair sold to the channel three years ago. But that is not the only headache the programme has caused the legal department at ITV.

In an episode broadcast two weeks ago, Cowell was shown smoking in the public area of a Dublin hotel during the Irish heats of the talent contest – a criminal offence since the smoking ban was introduced in the republic last March. The show dealt with the incident by pixellating the offending cigarette (though sadly not the offensive celebrity) on screen and hoping no one noticed. But many viewers did – just as they spotted that all the links recorded for the show by presenter Kate Thornton, in which she wittered on about such hoary clichés as Irish eyes smiling, creamy pints of Guinness and the gift of the gab – were actually filmed outside the Toucan Irish pub on Carlisle Street in London's West End.

I-SKY

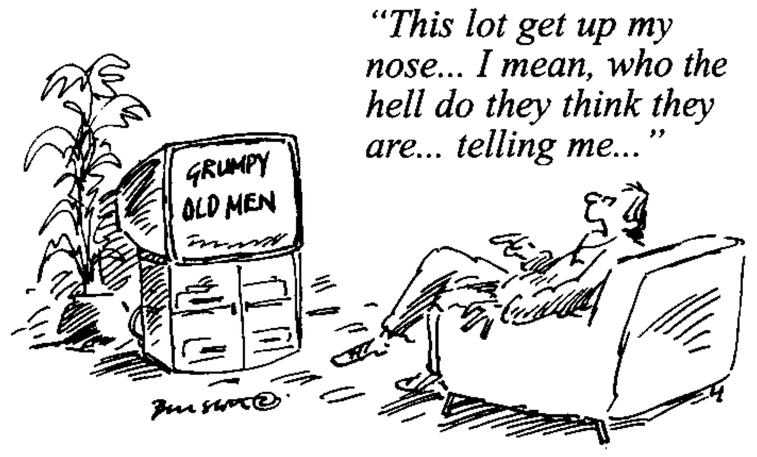
A keeping-it-in-the-family special

● "WHAT TO WATCH TONIGHT – BEST DOCUMENTARY: *Lethal Attraction: Why Americans Love Guns* (Sky One, 9pm). The right to own guns is in their constitution. But random shootings are all too common. Ex-*EastEnder* Ross Kemp, whose dad was in the police, visits seedy Los Angeles haunts to examine the problem and how it can be stemmed."

— TV recommendation in the *Sun* (prop: R. Murdoch) for a programme on Sky (prop: R. Murdoch) presented by Ross Kemp (husband of *Sun* editor Rebekah Wade)

● "*Hex* is a high-concept show. Traditionally, that means a project that can be summed up in a sentence. So, Hex is a supernatural teen drama of fallen angels and unrequited love. Or, put another way, etc, etc."

— 1,400-word feature in *Sunday Times* (prop: R. Murdoch) about *Hex*, a new drama series produced by his daughter Elisabeth Murdoch, purchased by his son James Murdoch and shown on Sky One (prop: R. Murdoch)



"This lot get up my nose... I mean, who the hell do they think they are... telling me..."

GREG DYKE may have gone, but initiatives like "One BBC" and "Making It Happen" continue to consume licence-payers' money.

In fact, post-Hutton the appetite for yet more of these fatuous internal communications exercises is actually on the increase. A group of senior managers will now tour the country to lead a series of "informal sessions" entitled: "Building public values: what does it mean for us?" The answer is probably redundancies.

There will also be "a separate series of BBC wide brainstorms about our future". These are called "Shape our Future" and a team of managers will magically merge hot air from both into four separate reviews.

CRITICS IN CON-TEXT

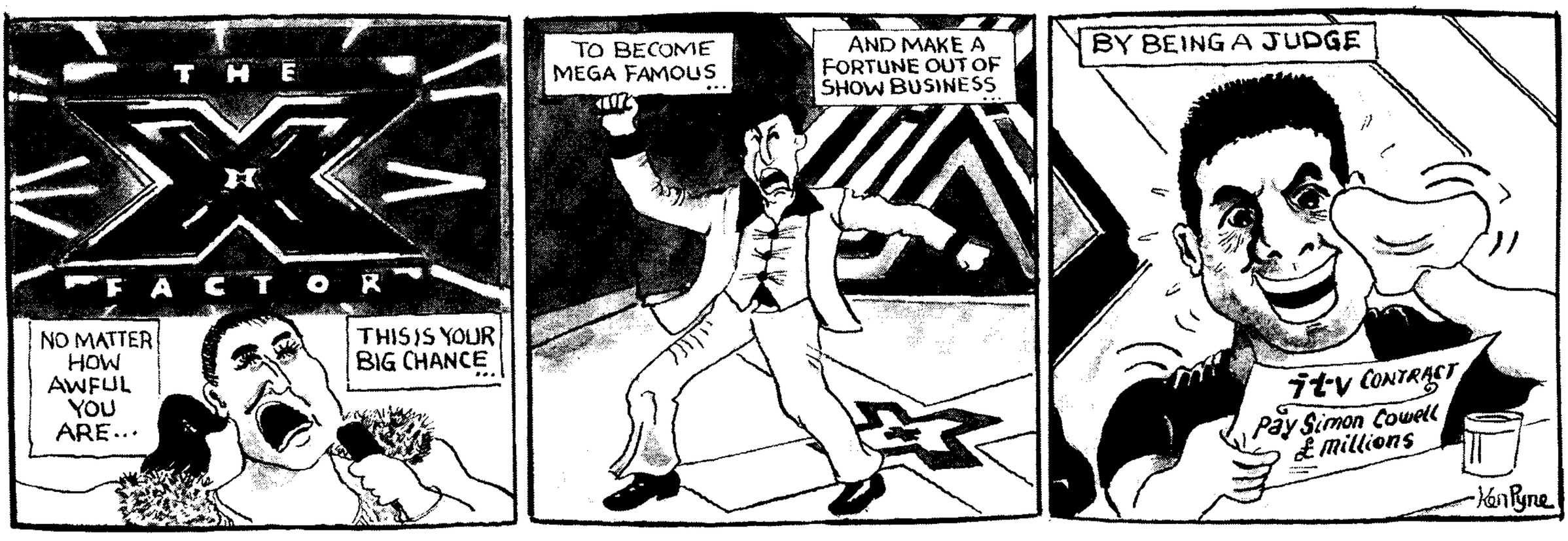
ANDREW Lloyd Webber's *The Woman in White* at the Palace Theatre appears from its publicity material to have been highly praised by the *Daily Telegraph*'s Charles Spencer, who enjoyed its "big, lush romantic melodies" and noted that "Maria Friedman is a great musical actress".

Strangely, the show's publicity did not find space for Spencer's overall conclusion – that "It gives me no pleasure at all to report that *The Woman in White* is a terrible disappointment" – or to point out that the full sentences in which those two quotes appeared ran as follows: "There are moments when Lloyd Webber comes up with the big lush romantic melodies that are his forte, though these days they tend to sound alarmingly like retreads of his own earlier work… Maria Friedman is a great musical actress who seems doomed to appear in second-rate shows."

Up the road at the Shaftesbury Theatre, meanwhile, the *Daily Express*'s Sheridan Morley receives even more of a mangling. "There is nothing in the west end quite like it," shriek the adverts for new musical *Bat Boy*, omitting the concluding part of Morley's sentence: "and for that we should be truly grateful".

"I haven't come here to sit on my backside," said Butt. "I don't think my best days are behind me, I've come here to win more trophies."

Grauniad


THE X FACTOR
NO MATTER HOW AWFUL YOU ARE...
THIS IS YOUR BIG CHANCE...
TO BECOME MEGA FAMOUS...
AND MAKE A FORTUNE OUT OF SHOW BUSINESS...
BY BEING A JUDGE
ITV CONTRACT
Pay Simon Cowell £ millions
Ken Pyne

DOING THE ROUNDS

UNDER "new" Labour's health reforms, most power rests with primary care trusts (PCTs), which control 75 percent of the NHS budget.

The initial pretence was that GPs would become the key decision-makers; but their role in the PCTs was swiftly marginalised by career NHS managers who are forced to implement the government's mantra of patient choice and a "mixed market economy". This thin disguise for privatisation is now so transparent that PCTs have been ordered by the department of health to offer at least "one independent option" to NHS patients undergoing routine surgery by December 2005.

Patients haven't asked for this; and most would prefer to go to their local NHS hospital if only it had the capacity and the parking. And when patients do choose a service the PCT isn't interested in, they have to fight to save it. The government has long had it in for single-handed GPs, with Tony Blair announcing to the Commons on 3 July 2002: "There has been a move over time away from single handed practices so as to improve the quality of care that people receive. That has been based on a great deal of evidence over a long time."

To use a medical term, this is complete bollocks. No such evidence exists; and single-handed practices score highly on many of the quality targets in the new GP contract, particularly patient satisfaction and disease management. But PCTs have taken it upon themselves to close such practices because they don't fit with the "new" Labour model of primary care: a huge group practice with ten GPs, three dentists (all private) and a McDonald's.

Maldon and South Chelmsford (MASC) PCT was so keen to get rid of Dr Ashley Pain's single-handed practice when he announced his retirement, it tried to force closure through before the new contract came in. No consultation with patients took place until 1,000 of them signed a petition and held a protest meeting. Now the practice will remain open with a new GP running it.

The same PCT was forced to make a similar U-turn when it tried to close a practice in South Woodham Ferrers, again without asking patients their opinion. One GP, Dr John Cormack, responded by running an unpaid service from the premises for four months until a sustained patient campaign of posters, petitions and letters forced the trust to reopen the surgery and pay the GP.

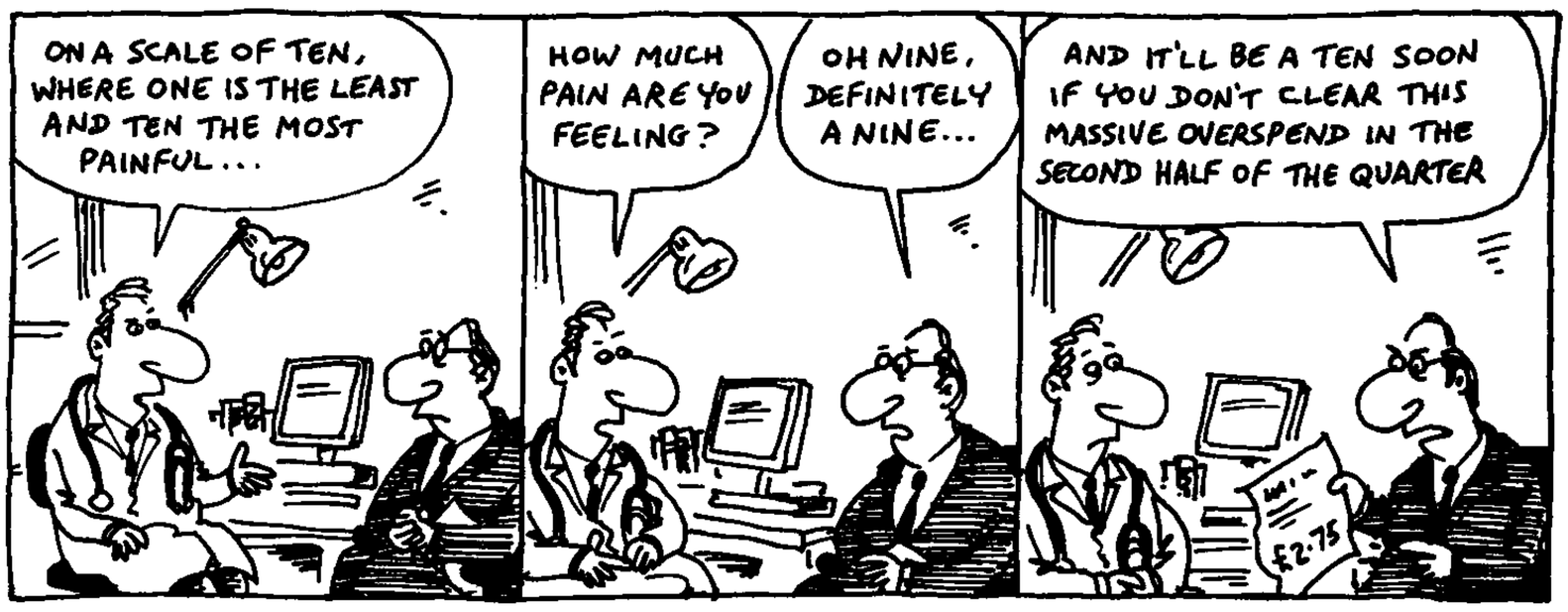
The chief executive of MASC PCT is Mike Harrison, who held a similar position at Southend Community Care Services Trust until consultants passed a vote of no confidence in him in 1998, alleging that he "colluded with South Essex health authority to destroy patient services". Harrison vigorously denied this but eventually resigned after an independent review of his management techniques.

Most managers who are forced to resign quickly get work elsewhere in the NHS. Harrison should at least be credited with having changed his mind; but in a truly devolved NHS, patients would be consulted about service changes well in advance. Those who wrote to health secretary John Reid, NHS chief executive Nigel Crisp and the strategic health authority to complain about the behaviour of the PCT were referred back to the PCT itself. Meanwhile, the vandalism of single-handed practices continues, with 300 forced to close in the last decade, usually against the wishes of their users. So much for patient choice.

M.D.

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY


ON A SCALE OF TEN, WHERE ONE IS THE LEAST AND TEN THE MOST PAINFUL...
HOW MUCH PAIN ARE YOU FEELING?
OH NINE, DEFINITELY A NINE...
AND IT'LL BE A TEN SOON IF YOU DON'T CLEAR THIS MASSIVE OVERSPEND IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE QUARTER
£2.75

SIGNAL FAILURES

Franchise folly

THE call at the Labour party conference for rail to be renationalised is embarrassing for ministers because they can't answer the question: what is the point of rail franchises?

The new call comes not from militant drivers' unions but from the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association which represents middle managers and other office staff who see every day what happens when railways are run primarily for profit, not public service.

Franchises were an attempt to create competition between train companies in the fantasy world of the Tories and their civil servants, who presumably expected trains to overtake each other like motorway traffic. In the event only two franchises (both Virgin's) made radical changes – and both are expensive cock-ups (see *Eyes passim*).

Most original franchise deals proved unrealistic and needed bail-outs. Consequently, franchises are now closely specified by the state, giving managers even less freedom to innovate than under British Rail. The franchises are on a par with other contracted services, like refuse collection, so it's no surprise contract specialist Serco has won two.

Rail franchises are so complex they keep a costly army of bureaucrats in work, monitoring "delivery" and assessing bids. The state has blown £41m of taxpayers' money in the last three years on protracted rail franchise competitions. Private firms spend about £1m each time they try to win a franchise – which they claw back through sky-high fares and subsidies.

One tell-tale sign that the government hasn't the faintest idea what franchises are for is its ever-changing ideas on franchise lengths and geography. "Franchises will be for a longer period than recently: five to seven years before extensions," transport secretary Alistair Darling announced this month. *Whoops!* Recent franchises have been for three, seven, nine, 10, 13, 15, 20 and 25 years. Firms with short franchises have no incentive to make long-term improvements. But long franchises also stifle innovation: if the state, at national or local level, wants changes later, the franchisee can demand exorbitant sums for variation in its contract without fear of a rival operator undercutting it.

"New" Labour's latest plan for franchise geography is to cut the total from 25 to 16, including merging the TransPennine Express franchise into the northern one. TPE was created just seven months ago after a long and costly separation from... the northern franchise!

AWARDING franchises to bus firms like National Express and Arriva should guarantee good service when buses replace trains because of track maintenance. Or perhaps not.

One *Eye* reader experienced National Express's bus expertise when travelling between Hinckley, in Leicestershire, and London. The promised Central Trains replacement bus never arrived but station staff had no authority to provide taxis from the adjacent rank. Passengers took taxis anyway and missed the London connection at Leicester. On the way back, the bus driver at Leicester asked if any passengers knew the way – then angrily threw them off the bus after the *Eye* reader expressed his despair.

On the evening of 1 August another *Eye* reader was in a crowd of passengers thrown off a slightly delayed Arriva train at Rhyl (north Wales). The bus to take them to Bangor left punctually and empty – as the passengers walked towards it. When a bus arrived from Bangor, the passengers were told they had to wait more than 90 minutes till the next train arrived. It took many irate phone calls to convince Arriva staff (none of them in Rhyl) that such a long wait was unreasonable.

On 8 August a different *Eye* reader arrived at Rhyl on the same Arriva train, again delayed. The bus provided to meet their train had, er, again left punctually and empty. Again it took "a good few phone calls" for Arriva to agree that the next bus, already too full to take any passengers off the later train, should leave without waiting 90 minutes.

RICHARD BRANSON was "emotional" last week after the media launch of the Pendolino trains leased by Virgin (which reach the same 125mph top speed as BR did back in the 1970s). "Britain has finally caught up and has overtaken most of the world," gushed Beardie.

He obviously hasn't heard about Eurostar and the Channel tunnel rail link, which is the only part of Britain genuinely to have caught up with the world standard of 190mph high-speed trains. But then they don't belong to Virgin.

'Dr B. Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

YOU'VE BEEN KRAMED

HUMILIATION for Hastings borough council's deputy leader Jay Kramer, whose ham-fisted attempt to use the law to intimidate a political opponent was given short shrift by a judge on 13 September.

As *Eye* 1115 reported, the Labour councillor attempted to obtain an interim injunction to prevent Evelyn Modlinger, a protester against Labour's botched regeneration plans for the town, from "harassing" her and causing "anxiety, distress and personal injury". But the recorder at Hastings county court, Simon Browne-Wilkinson QC, threw out the application, saying Kramer's evidence against her opponent, a former Lib Dem candidate at this year's council elections, was "thin".

The judge said three encounters spread out over a year did not amount to "harassment" – particularly when one consisted merely of Ms Modlinger handing out inoffensive leaflets at a council meeting at which she had not spoken to Kramer. Words had been exchanged in the street on 10 August this year, but as it was a chance encounter it could not be seen as harassment either. Furthermore, said the judge, as a public figure Cllr Kramer should be able to cope with a bit of criticism. "My conclusion... is that there is not a serious issue to be tried."

The judgment has not stopped Hastings's paranoid Labour regime persisting in its crude attempts to stifle free speech, however. Lib Dem councillor David Hancock has been ordered by chief legal officer Jayne Butters to remove criticism of the Labour group from his council web pages or face having them shut down. One "offensive" passage explains that he joined the Lib Dems after 14 years as a Labour councillor "because of the arrogance and lack of democracy that I encountered in the Labour group". In another Cllr Hancock describes Cllr Kramer as having "a very short fuse... quick to lose her own temper with people who challenge her opinion or disagree with her".

● LAST MONTH the London borough of Southwark's housing department wrote to council tenant Jim Sparks saying: "Enjoyed your holiday? I hope so, but did you neglect paying your rent to fund it?" Alas Mr Sparks was unable to read this missive, having died two months previously, aged 84.

The letter, opened by Mr Sparks's widow Louisa, 85, demanded an immediate payment of £525 for alleged rent arrears. But the couple were not and had never been in rent arrears. Nor had they been able to afford a holiday for many years.

Apologising "unreservedly" to Mrs Sparks for her distress, Southwark claimed the letter was "computer generated". Perhaps the council might consider employing a computer with a less caustic style in future.

RUMMER DO

BATH, in common with everywhere else, has a problem with aggressive drunks in the city centre in the evenings. So Bath and North-east Somerset council (Banes) has joined forces with Inspector Knacker, who has vowed to take a firm line with those who misbehave in the city's pubs and clubs.

But perhaps Banes should put its own public house in order first, following another incident at the city's Rummer pub, where councillors and officers unwind after stressful meetings. Earlier this month a barman had to intervene to halt a loud altercation between Lib Dem councillor Colin Darracott, "executive member for economic development", and Banes's chief executive John Everitt. The spat followed a similar incident in the Rummer involving Cllr Nicole O'Flaherty and local music impresario Tom Clarke, an outspoken critic of Cllr O'Flaherty's policies (*Eye* 1102).

Clearly everyone needs to cool off with a dip in the city's wonderful new spa complex... if only it was open instead of being three years late and millions of pounds over budget!

RULE OF LAW

DONCASTER'S new £140,000-a-year managing director Susan Law got off to a good start in the Beacon of Sleaze by claiming £1,500 interview expenses. Well, she did have to come from South Africa, even if not in economy class.

The appointment of Law's former colleague from her days on Adelaide city council, Peter Dale, as £105,000 executive director of development looks likely to stir more controversy – and that's before the little matter of relocation costs kicks in.

The dynamic duo's task is to deliver Mayor Winter's seven "transformational goals": the "Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield International Airport"; the new Doncaster Transport Interchange; a new performance venue; a new stadium; the Lakeside development; the racecourse and Doncaster Education City (*Eyes passim*). Great vision. Pity the money isn't there. One of Law's first acts has been to freeze all council budgets. And the council's record of financial mis-management is so dire as to nobble such ventures before they start.

Only this month the £50m Earth Centre environmental project closed its doors after five years with dozens of redundancies. The trustees are handing the project over to the council, which is a bit odd given that the council has had a serious input into the centre from the start through its nominees. One of the few beneficiaries of the project in real terms was a consultancy owned and led by, er, Martin Winter, now the elected mayor of Doncaster.

● REPRESENTING one's electors from across the Atlantic is becoming all the rage among councillors these days. In the last *Eye* we told how Waltham Forest Tory David Divine was still collecting his £660 monthly allowance, despite having taken up a post as Professor of Lumberjack Studies at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia last January. Divine has since resigned as a councillor.

Now we hear that Stephen Gregory, an Independent member of Wear Valley district council in County Durham, has been sunning himself in the Caribbean since January while continuing to draw an allowance worth £4,500 a year. Cllr Gregory sold his butcher's shop in Bishop Auckland last year to pursue "private business interests" – believed to involve a Ugandan partner – in the Dominican Republic. Happily he finds time in a punishing schedule to fly back to Britain frequently enough to attend the minimum number of council meetings required to avoid disqualification.

RAJA-BARGY

THE tradition of plain-speaking by Conservative councillors in Peterborough is being upheld by a new generation, following disqualification from public office of the city's former Tory leader Neville "fuck the Irish" Sanders earlier this month (*Eye* 1115).

Mayor Raja Akhtar, whose job description in the city council's constitution declares him to be "ambassador for the city council, and also for Peterborough itself on the wider regional, national and international stage" has thrown himself into his ambassadorial role with relish.

Peterborough, he told the *Sunday People* in an interview earlier this month, is a "crime-ridden, rubbish-strewn hellhole". It was all the fault of asylum seekers, said Cllr Akhtar, who was born in Kashmir in 1960 and came to Britain at the age of 12. "Many of the newcomers have learned to milk the system. They receive benefits and comfortable housing, then take cash-in-hand jobs. Flaunting flashy cars, designer clothes and mobiles, they have infuriated locals..." And so on.

Cllr Akhtar's comments were particularly timely, given that the Greater Peterborough Investment Agency had just shelled out a small fortune for an advertising campaign in the London *Evening Standard*, extolling the virtues of Peterborough and encouraging businesses to relocate. After all, why pay Ken's congestion charge when you could move to a "crime-ridden, rubbish-strewn hellhole"?

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELDS

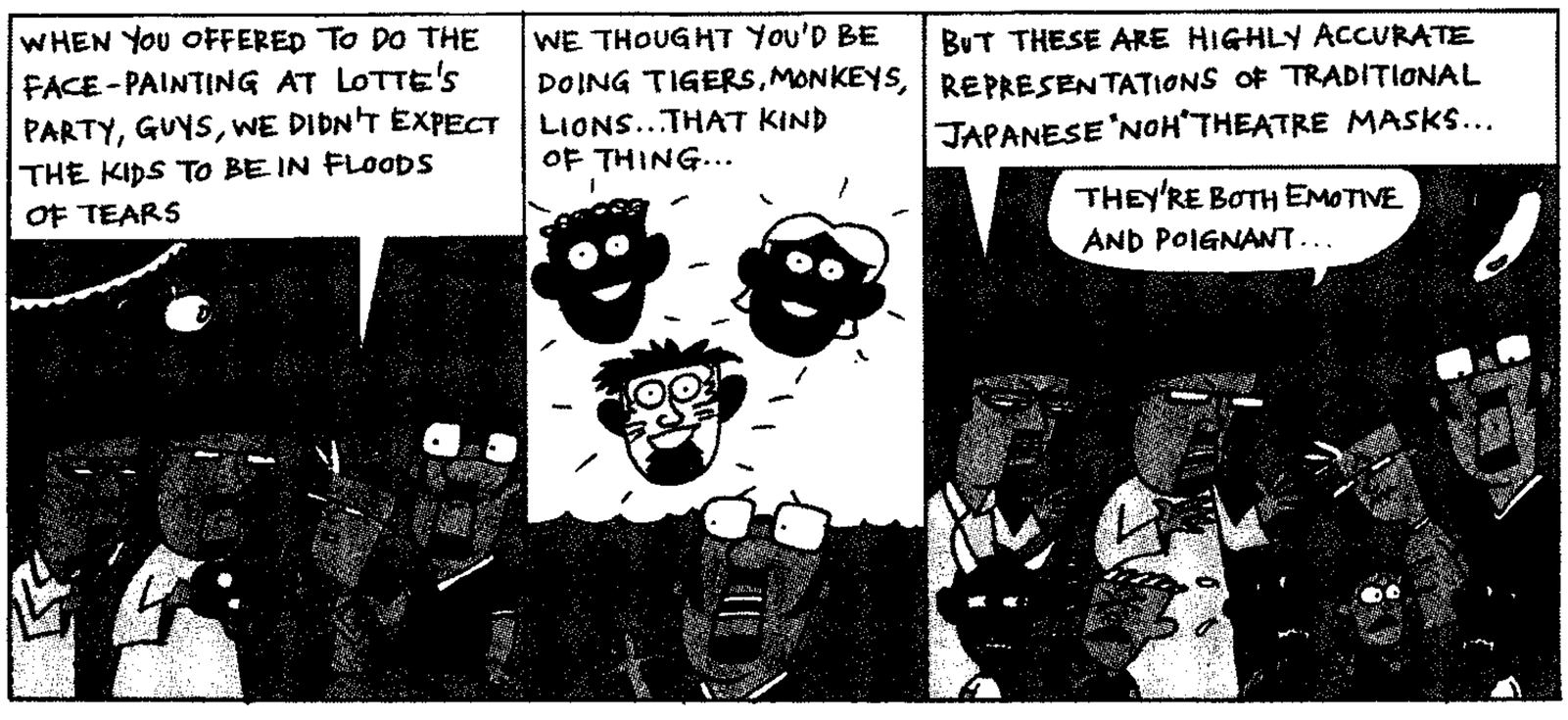
FOR a brief moment in August it seemed this column might become redundant, as culture secretary Tessa Jowell talked up the idea of competitive sports at the heart of the PE curriculum, and education secretary Charles Clarke announced "the toughest-ever protection for school playing fields".

But not tough enough to protect nine acres of fields and sporting facilities at Hewett School in Norwich. Plans for a £10m private fitness club, a nursing home and a private day nursery (reported in *Eye* 1104) were approved this month by Norwich city council's planning committee in the face of objections from Sport England, the Norwich Society and many parents of pupils at the school. The plans have been passed on to the regional Government Office (GO-East) for the final nod.

The new David Lloyd Leisure centre will have swimming pools, tennis courts, all-weather pitches and fitness studios to which the school will have limited free access. But another vast chunk of the school's fields will be eaten up by the enormous 250-space car park for those who can afford to exercise and drive to the gym.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

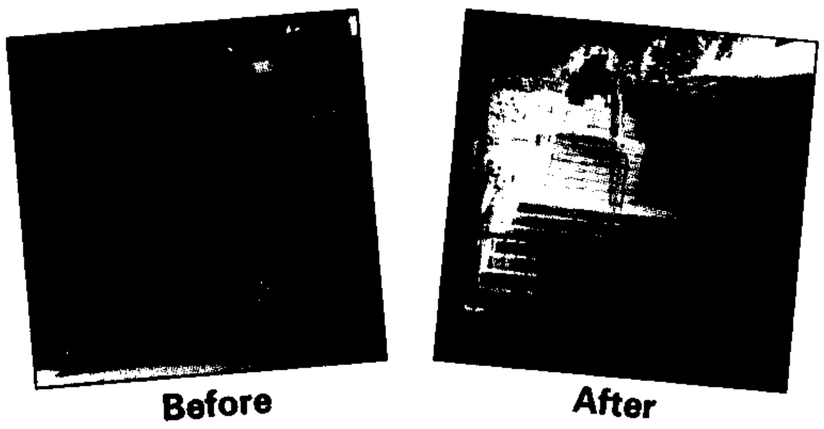
KNIFE & PACKER


WHEN YOU OFFERED TO DO THE FACE-PAINTING AT LOTTE'S PARTY, GUYS, WE DIDN'T EXPECT THE KIDS TO BE IN FLOODS OF TEARS
WE THOUGHT YOU'D BE DOING TIGERS, MONKEYS, LIONS...THAT KIND OF THING...
BUT THESE ARE HIGHLY ACCURATE REPRESENTATIONS OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE 'NOH' THEATRE MASKS...
THEY'RE BOTH EMOTIVE AND POIGNANT...

NOOKS and CORNERS

READERS will recall the brutish and pointless proposal to alter the surroundings of the west end of Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff, which involved moving ancient tombs and changing the picturesque arrangements and levels depicted by Turner, among other artists (*Eyes passim*). I am sorry to report this has been done – and badly.

The tomb chests which the cathedral authorities insisted were merely cosmetic turned out to sit above many ancient burials, and the banal paved area for "gathering" which has been created in front of the west door lies at the bottom of 11 steps – twice as many as there were before. As the long curved descending path to the



Before

After

cathedral entrance, beautifully cobbled, has also been replaced by flights of new steps, none of this is much fun for the disabled – yet disabled access was the ostensible excuse for these gratuitous alterations in the first place.

The devious barbarism of Llandaff's clergy has now gone much further. St Michael's Theological College – the most important theological college in Wales apart from Lampeter – has suddenly been closed by Barry Morgan, Bishop of Llandaff and Archbishop of Wales. This puts some interesting and distinguished buildings at risk: the house built for himself by John Prichard of the firm of Prichard and Seddon, the Victorian architects responsible for the rebuilding of Llandaff Cathedral; and the chapel of 1957-59, one of the best works of George G. Pace, the distinguished church architect responsible for the reconstruction of the cathedral after wartime bombing, and which (thanks to the uselessness of CADW, the Welsh historic monuments body) is not listed.

Not content with this assault on education, Bishop Barry has countenanced the sale of the Cathedral Library which was housed in St Michael's College and has consequently been rendered homeless. This consisted of some 5,000 volumes ranging in date from the mid-16th century to the mid-20th.

Last year, a proposal to sell the post-1800 books was accepted by the cathedrals and churches commission, provided a proper catalogue was made of this library, that advice was sought for the best means of disposing of surplus books and that suitable homes were found for important volumes.

Some hope! Having got rid of the cathedral's archivist, the bishop displayed an enthusiasm for disposing of books worthy of Savonarola or the Nazi Party. Most of the books have been disposed of secretly, to different firms such as Bonham's and Maggs Bros, without any proper catalogue being made. And while disposing of the 19th and 20th century books should have reduced the library by about half, in the event only 83 books have been retained out of 5,000. So much for history; so much for learning; so much for Christianity in Llandaff.

The money made by this squalid sale can only be used for educational purposes, and the idea is to use it to create a reading room. But there won't now be many books to put in it.

IN Eye 1111, a letter was published from Paul Finch, acting chairman of CABE, the commission for the built environment, defending the record of his predecessor, the property developer Sir Stuart Lipton (Eyes passim) and arguing that, contrary to my strictures, CABE possesses expertise about historic buildings and environments among its commissioners and officers.

Some of us doubt whether that expertise is ever consulted, let alone listened to; and SAVE Britain's Heritage points out to me four cases in which CABE's advice was completely lacking in any reference to concerns about historic structures – advice which has been used by developers to promote their undesirable schemes.

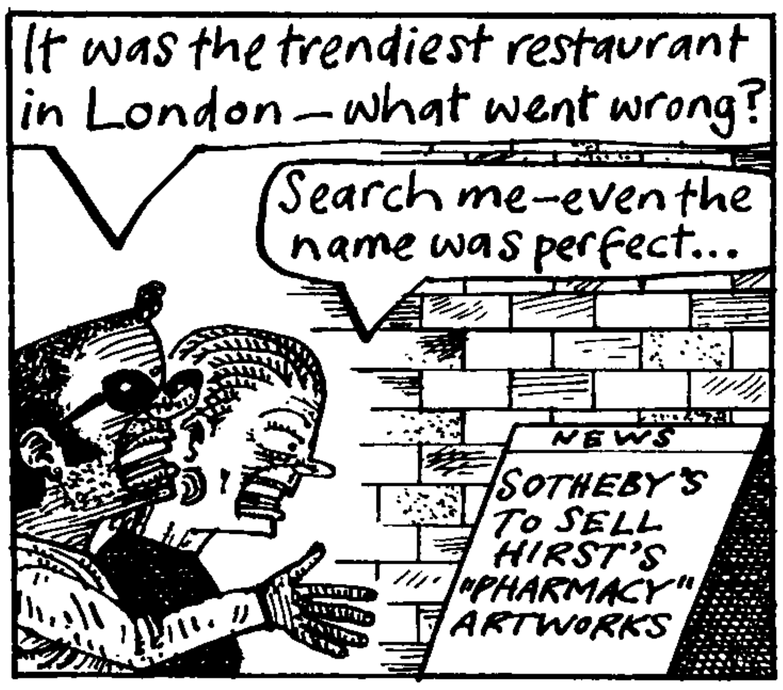
These are, firstly, the later Span 4 at Paddington Station in the style of Brunel (Eye 1091), whose replacement by an office block above miserable new platforms was supported by CABE. Then there was the proposal to build blocks of flats in the garden of the early 18th century Governor's House at Berwick-upon-Tweed (Eye 1067), which was supported by CABE but, happily, rejected after public inquiry. Thirdly, there is the recent case of Toddington Manor (Eye 1103), the amazing Gothic Revival mansion where the proposal by Warner Holidays to convert the building and build large extensions in the grounds were actively supported by CABE but have now been withdrawn. Lastly, there is the case of the General Market buildings at Smithfield in the City of London (Eye 1100), where CABE's comments to the City on the proposals for replacing them with several tall office blocks fail to refer to the historic character of the area.

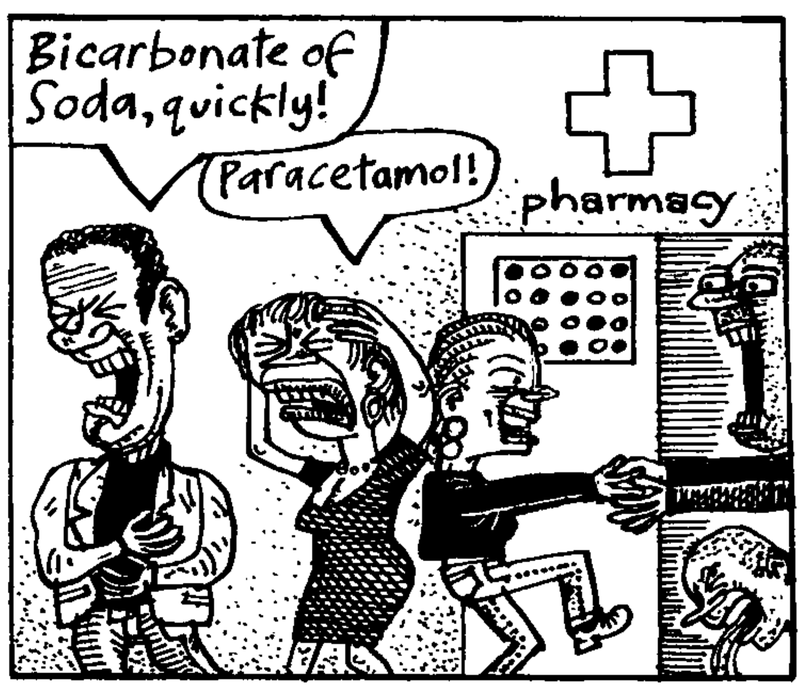
Perhaps CABE should stick to its assumed brief of extolling exciting designs by fashionable and/or knighted or ennobled architects and leave the protection of historic buildings and areas to those bodies that know and care about them, like English Heritage.

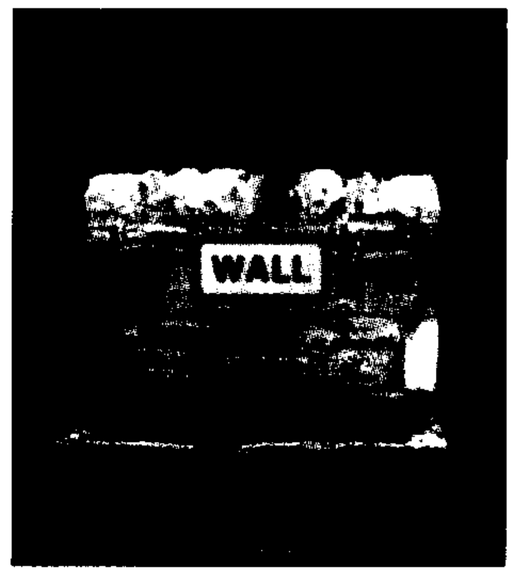
'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH


It was the trendiest restaurant in London – what went wrong?
Search me – even the name was perfect...
NEWS
SOTHEBY'S TO SELL HIRST'S "PHARMACY" ARTWORKS





I-SPY

Northumberland

Submitted by Suzanne Newell.

£10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs)*

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

MORE on the sudden cancellation of the mother-of-all-*Carmen*s that was meant to be playing to audiences of 16,000 a night in Seville this month.

The collapse of the project (and the music festival packaged around it) was no big surprise to anyone who had watched the shambles gathering around promoter Michael Ecker. But it transpires that the disaster (which it is for the hundreds of musicians who had been engaged) was no surprise to technicians working on the show.

Many of them began to realise months ago that Ecker never had the money to see his plans through. Time and again he missed deadlines for advance payments to technical suppliers. Then, a week before set construction, he told one major contractor there would be no payment until the show was up and running: an outrageous proposal that would effectively have transferred the financial risk from the promoter on to the carpenters and electricians.

The contractor downed tools and refused to take them up again until advances were paid. But then something else emerged: Ecker's company had still not booked flights or hotels for the army of stage staff scheduled within days to descend on Seville from all over Europe. Shortly afterwards, Ecker announced that his conductor was unwell and forced to withdraw, coupled with the equal misfortune that no substitute "of sufficient standing" could be found to replace him.

One could almost feel sorry for Ecker but for the fact that he insists his *Carmen* is still a going concern (merely "postponed" to *next* September) and is trying to persuade those who bought tickets to hang on to them rather than ask for their money back. How fitting that *Carmen* is designated an "opera comique".

Meanwhile the plug has also been pulled on the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) two weeks before it was due to start a 15-city tour in the eastern US. Despite being a so-called "world class orchestra", it had agreed to a "Music of Hollywood" programme, with film scores from *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Harry Potter*, to be played in 10,000-seat arenas.

The Americans cancelled the tour because of poor ticket sales, with Nashville-based promoter Jeff Bown blaming the jittery pre-election economy and pledging to reschedule for 2006. Unfortunately for the regular players and freelancers joining the orchestra for the tour, the LSO's management goofed by not getting enough money up front. As a result, some of the musicians have complained to the Musicians' Union about losses of around £500,000 for three weeks' lost pay.

As the LSO is self-governing, the regular members will have to take the loss, either as employees or shareholders; but the outsiders want to be paid. It's to be hoped the LSO hasn't spent all the £500,000 grant it got from the department for education and skills earlier this year — a few weeks after the wife of schools minister David Miliband joined the LSO board.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Letters

Control freaks

Sir,

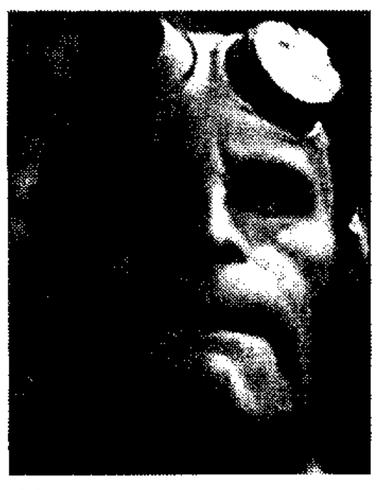
Sad it is that Jonathan Ewer BSc (Hons) and his benighted tribe of schoolboys believe that without the control experiment method, any knowledge is thoroughly useless. Drug companies know better, and are trawling so-called primitive peoples to exploit their knowledge of plant cures gained by the "try it and if it works keep using it" approach.

Phages do appear useful. The failure to apply a control test experiment – because they are not commercially exploitable – shows how far science has fallen since great men invented the control test process for the advancement of all understanding, not just money-making.

Humanely yours,
MARK LEWINSKI BA (Hons),

Via email.

Lookalike



Airman

Hellboy

Sir,

After seeing the picture in the Nooks & Corners section on page 12 of the current edition, I was struck by the similarity between the thin-lipped airman featured in the detail of the proposed Battle of Britain memorial and the eponymous star of the current action movie, Hellboy. Is this art imitating art?

Yours,
FREDERICK DOVE,

Via email.

LUVVIES

Earlier this year I had my hair feng-shuied.

JERRY HALL
Sunday Times

Submitted by Simon Blackmore

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Burning issue

Sir,

While obviously not commenting on these cases now before the GMC, I am surprised at MD's attitude to the completion of Form C of the cremation certificate (Eye 1115, p10).

To complete Form C legally the doctor is required to do a careful examination of the body, see and question the doctor who has attended the patient in his/her last illness and say if that doctor was seen alone, see and question at least one person from a number who had some connection with the deceased in his/her last illness such as a relative or nurse or other doctor.

MD suggests that few doctors carry out these requirements. If they do not, quite simply, they are breaking the law and are signing false certificates.

This did not happen in these parts of Cumbria when I was in practice; indeed I know of a case when an undertaker had got off the mark a little too quickly and was required to unscrew the coffin lid, extract the staples holding the tasteful lining in place, remove the shroud and place the body in a position where a full external examination could be done.

Incidentally, there is in addition a Form F to be signed by the Crematorium Medial Referee who has to certify that the requirements of various cremation acts have been complied with and has the power to order post-mortems.

It amazes me that with all these safeguards in place Shipman's activities were not spotted long before they were; but to be fair, it was a doctor who first voiced suspicions about him.

Yours sincerely,
A.M. RANKIN,

Via email.

JUST FANCY THAT!

King's College School, Wimbledon
Full term begins today at KCS Wimbledon. Mr Ralph Cake, Senior Master, has retired after thirty five distinguished years...

The Times

McBollocks

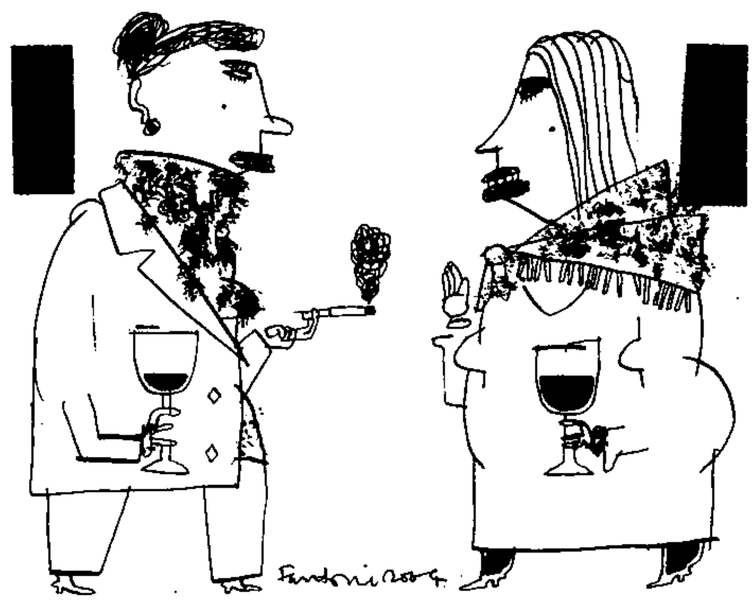
Sir,

Re: Tetra, Masters and Servants (1115, p. 27). I assume your map of the UK doesn't cover that bit north of Hadrian's Wall. Up here in Scotland, we do not consider Broughty Ferry (a suburb of Dundee) to be "near" Gleneagles, which is mid-way between Perth and Stirling, about 40 miles away as the crow flies.

GRAHAM M. BROWN,

Kirkcaldy.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Now we've taken Cassius and Paloma out of private education and sent them to the local comprehensive, they really are doing so much better"

Myers culpa

Sir,

As one of the alleged "posh gits who went to public school" (actually my father was a bus conductor and I obtained an 11+ state scholarship to a Northern Irish grammar school), and blessed as I am with a consequent education in both Latin and Greek, I am moved to assist Mr Myers (Eye 1115) with some Latin translation. "Passim" means "everywhere" or "throughout" and "Res ipsa loquitor" would mean "Let the matter speak for itself" if the Eye had spelled "loquitur" correctly.

As Mr Myers asserts that he was taught neither English nor Latin at school, I am not at all sure that translating "Degree Citation In Full" would make him laugh any more than he already does.

He also echoes the complaints of those Eye readers who have asked that Dumb Britain should include the correct answers. In so doing, he and they reveal that they do no possess even the most basic general knowledge – surely the whole point of Dumb Britain.

It is a national disgrace that anyone, such as Mr Myers, has been deprived of a proper education. Quite apart from denying the pleasures of appreciating Dumb Britain, and Degree Citation, ignorance feeds class bigotry and indeed envy of anyone who is better educated.

Yours faithfully,
JOSEPH HOLMES,

Via email.

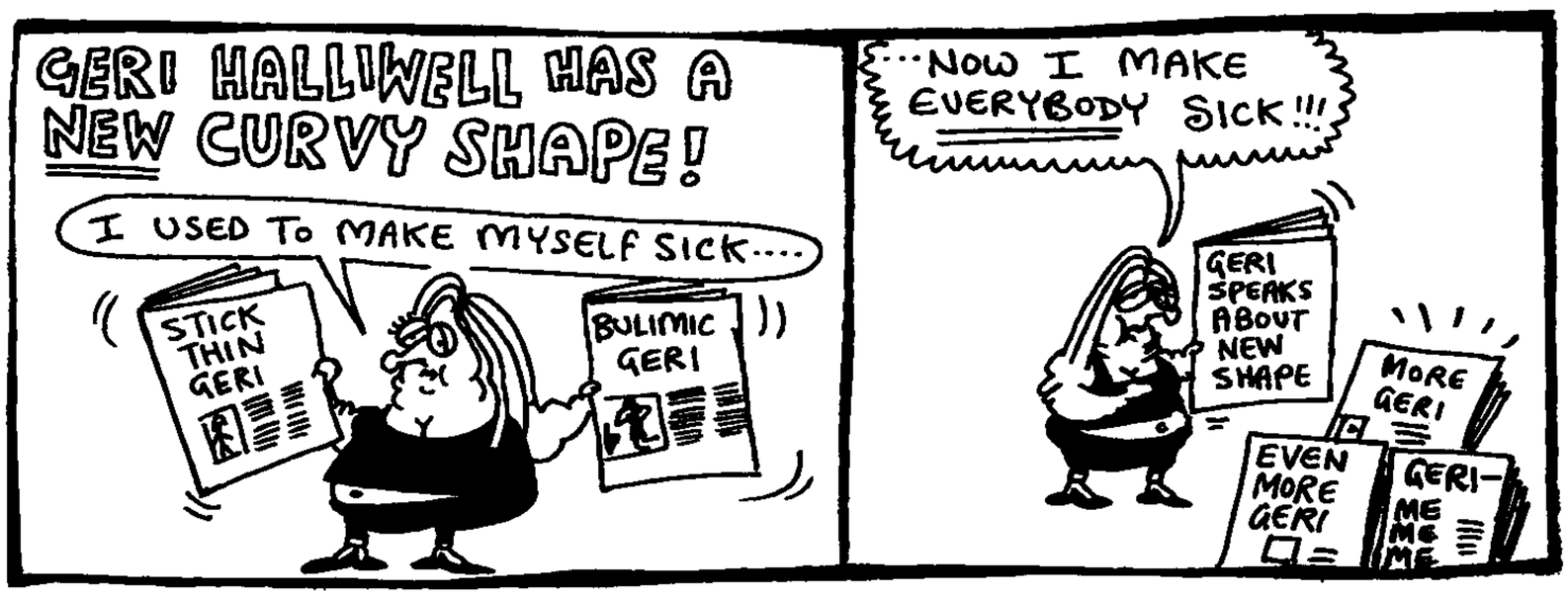
Sir,

G. Myers from Ilkley is not only a disgrace to Yorkshire and secondary modern schools, but an embarrassment to himself.

I too went to a sec mod and need no explanation of the Degree Citation or Dumb Britain. Anyone who does should be "reading" the Sun, and not Private Eye.

The matter speaks for itself, indeed.
MALCOLM ROBINSON,

Barnsley.



Fox to vote against ban on hunting

Bristol Evening Post

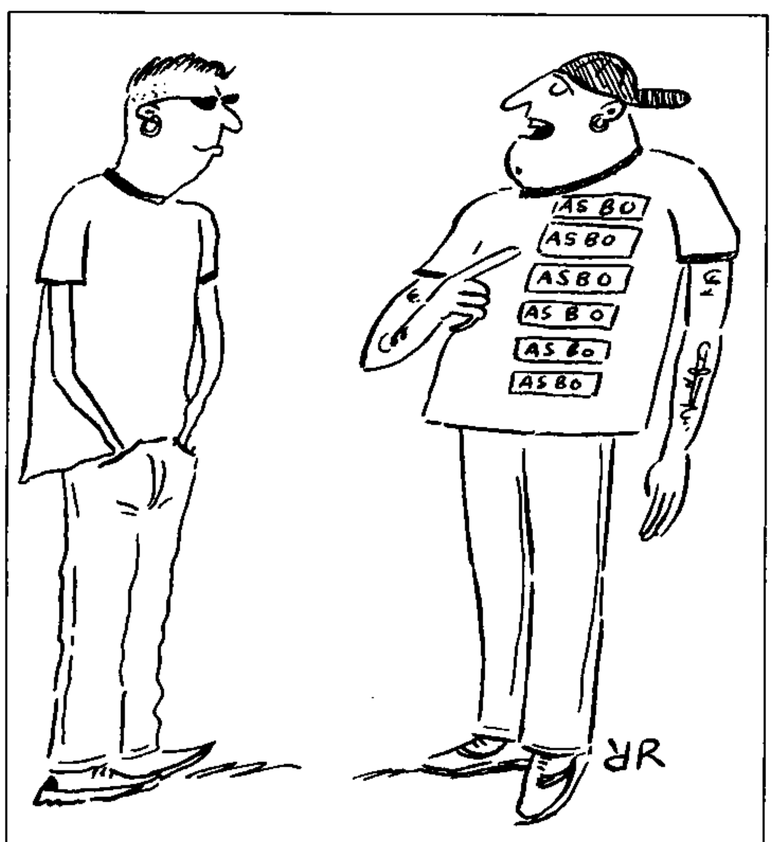
Chew on this

Sir,

Catherine Andrew (Letters, Eye 1115) needs to educate herself about what healthy food is. It isn't food that's been processed, packaged and labelled "healthy eating" by a supermarket on the grounds that it has a bit less salt, sugar or saturated fat. It's laid out in farmers' markets – yes, they exist in London too – as naked as the day it was pulled from the soil, or it's delivered to your door in boxes from organic farms. My first visit online to a box scheme delivering in London features a happy customer pointing out that her veg box would cost twice as much from her supermarket, and that's true here in Devon, too. Grains and beans go a long way for very little, as any student knows. Good meat's more expensive but you don't have to eat it every day.

Like Ms Andrew, I belong to the low-income category, and that's a major reason I don't eat processed food from supermarkets, "healthy eating" or no. Luckily, educating oneself about food is something that governments and corporations haven't found a way of packaging and charging us a premium for. Give them time, though.

Yours in rude health and unutterable poverty,
CLAIRE ROBINSON,
Chagford, Devon.



"This one? Binge-drinking and public disorder with ABH charges overturned on lack of CCTV evidence"

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Gender has nothing to do with being a man or a woman."
NICKY CAMPBELL, Radio 5 Live
(John Yeo)

"A better statistician than me will tell you that he [Reyes] has scored once every 58 minutes he has been on the pitch this season."
JOHN MOTSON, BBC
(Ben Norris)

"Tony Blair and Gordon Brown are caught between rival millstones."
JAMES COX, BBC Radio 4
(Matthew Cox)

"Their goal on the stroke of halftime unsettled us, and, no matter what you say during the interval, there's that little bit of toothache in their minds."
STEVE COPPELL, bbc.co.uk
(Lewis Harper)

"Sven should be hauled before the coals..."
GRAHAM BEECROFT, Talk Sport
(Mike Charalambous)

Letter from **Baghdad**

from Our Own Correspondent

THE centre of Baghdad is in lock-down these days as the Green Zone, the fortress of the centre inhabited by the Americans and the ministries, is bombarded nightly by rocket and mortar and hit by day by suicide bombers. In mid-September 10 suicide car bombs went off in three days killing 200, mostly Iraqis trying to go to work or sign on for work with the fledgling police force.

On the roadblocks the American detail commanders say they know how to recognise the suicide drivers. "Usually they're young men who have shaved their beards and dress in white robes as they have been prepared for Paradise," a young lieutenant tells us. Too bad, then, that in one of the recent suicide car bombs, inflicting huge damage near a roadblock, the driver was prepared to blow his wife and small children along with himself to kingdom come.

The bombers are getting cannier and bolder. One car bomb goes off; the Americans and Iraqi police try to sort out the carnage and chaos – only to be ambushed by a second kamikaze attack by car bomber ploughing into the rescue teams. Remote control roadside bombs are now being triggered by wire lead: much more precise than radio-controlled devices and a sure sign that the old Baathist Iraqi army is getting its act together.

With the latest wave of kidnappings attention has turned to the Jihadi groups – putatively recruited from Saudi and Syrian extremists – led by one Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. New ground is being broken in barmy, nihilistic terror, with the murder of the two Italian female aid workers and the torture through cyber space of the hostage Ken Bigley and his two murdered American colleagues. By the pricking of my thumbs something truly weird this way comes with the figure of Mr Musab al-Zarqawi.

Most of my thoughtful, cultured Iraqi and Arab friends believe that the super-bogeyman image of Zarqawi has been overblown by interested western parties, the CIA in particular. A Jordanian playboy turned gangster, turned Jihadi loony, he makes a poor fist of being Osama bin Laden's man in Iraq. He hates most of the country's Muslims – because they are the wrong sort by sectarian belief or ethnic stock, Shiites, Kurds and Turcmen – as much as the Americans and their friends. The latest *bayan* from the Jordanian Sweeney Todd declares the Americans, Shiites, Brits and Kurds to be locked together in "the alliance of heresy".

To which the obvious riposte must be: *cui bono*, mate? The figure Zarqawi, whether fact or artefact, is hell bent on getting the Shias, Sunnis and Kurds to fight each other. He appears to be hand in glove with the old stay-behinds of the Baath party, the army and republican guard, who provide him with the stuff for his suicide bombs: usually four or five artillery shells lightly marinated by detonator fuze and a sprinkling of commercial explosive. But the aims of the Jihadis and the Baath are totally opposed. "The Baathists just want to return to the old regime of greed as usual," said a jaundiced Brit diplomat last week.

The trouble is that the Americans and Brits don't really seem to know who is running the violence across central Iraq, and is now hitting again the northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul. They are not sure if the former regime militias and remnants of the army have a coherent command structure or strategy. If you'll pardon the vulgarism, the Brit and Americans are looking at a huge postmodern *jacquerie* – an uprising without a programme.

Meanwhile in the south of the country the British soldiers have been plugging on doing their own thing. In August they fired nearly 100,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and battled daily with the Mahdi militias of the maverick cleric, Moqtada al Sadr. Three Brit soldiers were killed, and more than 40 wounded. A sergeant was incinerated by petrol bombs; a young Fijian soldier dragged his company commander from his shot-up carrier and saved his life with the first aid he gave under fire; a couple of mechanics repaired two vehicles while up to their waists in oil and shit in an open sewer while a fire fight went on round them. The soldiers have no regrets – particularly after they saw the Moqtada men driving women into the streets and dragging small children by the hand to give cover.

In the south particularly there are signs of recovery: schools opening, date groves replanted, and oil flowing. Iraqis turn up to join the police and national guard, but whether they will be strong enough to keep Iyyad Allawi or whoever succeeds him in power next year is moot. Iraq may not be at breaking point quite yet, but it is far from the fixing point. We are still drifting from Rumsfeld's realm of the known unknowns to the unknowns. To take a simple example: in the realms of local spookery, Brit intelligence is still hampered by the lack of good Arabic speakers.

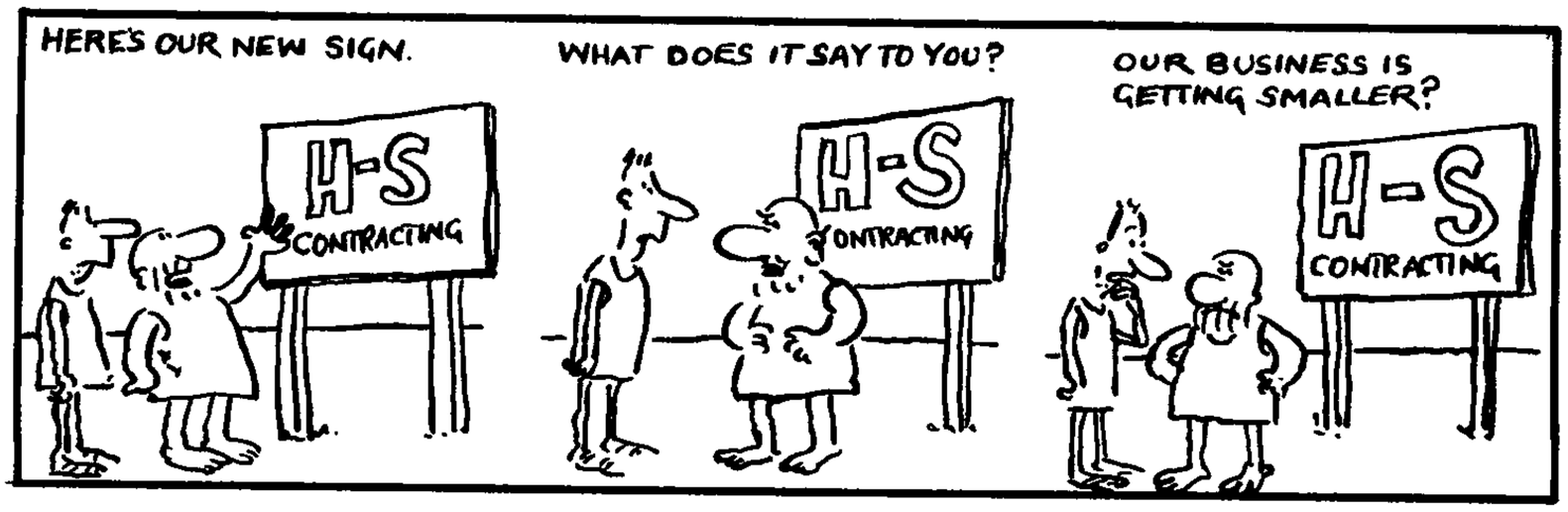
None of this was lost on the UK's top soldier General Sir Mike Jackson on his recent visit to the troops in Basra and Baghdad. He is a man for keeping his own counsel, despite the generous offer of his VIP guests Sir Max Hastings, the Clausewitz of the MTV generation and UN guru William Shawcross to give him theirs. Sir Mike believes there are only months and not years to make Allawi and the constitutional programme work. So this is no time to be chasing further adventures of the Washington neo-cons in Iran, Syria and Afghanistan. Lets hope he's prepared to divulge his counsel to the man in Downing Street.

Warballs

● "It's no surprise that footballer's wife Zoe Lucker has ditched the bleach and gone for a studied brunette look. Therapist Susan Quilliam thinks hair trends can be read as social barometers. 'Blonde hair signifies fun. The fashion for brunette is partly a reaction to the social pressures that come from war and the threat of terrorism. In due course bottle blonde might come back as a way of offsetting those fears." – ***Observer***.

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



Pseuds Corner

Drawing on Politeness Theory and the Community of Practice model, we examine the uses and functions of the expletive fuck in interaction between workers in a New Zealand soap factory work team. The factory team was extensively recorded in their daily interactions to obtain a corpus of 35 hours of authentic workplace talk from which a small number of paradigmatic interactions are selected for discussion in this paper. Particular attention is given to the way in which the expletive fuck is used in two face threatening speech acts, direct complaints and refusals, and its contrasting function in the speech act of whingeing. The analysis focuses in the complex socio-pragmatic functions of fuck and its role as an indicator of membership in a specific community of practice.

Journal of Pragmatics

I haven't got round to changing the battery in my alarm clock, so I get my assistant to give me a wake-up call about 10 am instead. I'll then go downstairs, put on some coffee – always organic, always decaffeinated – and feed Helix, my dog. I named him after the chromosome structure that makes up DNA.

A life in the day of MICHAEL STIPE
Sunday Times Magazine

Even though he is a student of modern management, Brian Kerr is unlikely to be aware of the finer points of Jungian psychology. But when he returns tomorrow to the city where the Swiss doctor first started his studies – Basle – the Republic of Ireland's manager could do worse, along with pondering his midfield permutations, than acknowledge the thinking behind Jung's theory of synchronicity.

JASON BURT
Independent on Sunday

So, as a supplement to Levi-Strauss, one is tempted to propose that shit can also serve as a matiere-a-penser: the three basic types of toilet form an excremental correlative-counterpoint to the Levi-Straussian triangle of cooking (the raw, the cooked and the rotten). In a traditional German toilet, the hole into which shit disappears after we flush is right at the front, so that shit is first laid out for us to sniff and inspect for traces of illness. In the typical French toilet, on the contrary, the hole is at the back: i.e. shit is supposed to disappear as quickly as possible. Finally, the American (Anglo-Saxon) toilet presents a synthesis, a mediation between these opposites: the toilet basin is full of water, so that the shit floats in it, visible, but not to be inspected...

SLAVOJ ZIZEK
London Review of Books

Pseuds Corporate

We want our staff to take charge of their own destiny, manage our customers through the journey experience. Our aim is to transport customers door-to-door via a total journey experience that is the last word in comfort and convenience.

A welcome to Fenchurch Street from rail operator c2c

CONTRIBUTORS: Gerald Dorey, Ben Sheppard, Eugene Weber, Rael Martell, Jonathan Eley.

£10 paid for all entries

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "For many years, only 2,232 characters were legally permissible in people's names," a spokesman for the Ministry of Justice told reporters in Tokyo, "and the government was keen to increase the list, and to give people greater choice. So we consulted with scholars, and last month we issued a list of 578 additional characters that parents could use when naming their children. However, the public outcry that has greeted some of these characters has made it essential for us to reconsider the list, and to remove some of the proposals. Because we have to accept that while people wanted greater choice, many of them are indignant at the idea of characters for words such as 'piss', 'fart', 'cancer,' 'excrement,' and 'rape' being used as part of people's names."

The spokesman was referring to protests that followed an attempt by the Name Character section of Japan's Legislative Council to expand the pool of legally-acceptable characters in Japanese names. "Almost a hundred of the characters have drawn protests, especially the ones I mentioned earlier. But we've also had complaints about the characters for 'vagina,' 'prostitute' and 'buttocks,' and even the ones for 'slur' and 'rumour.' So far, nine have been definitely eliminated from the list, but we expect to have removed about fifty by the time the list is given final approval." *(Mainichi Shimbun, 25/7/04. Spotter: Robert Harland)*

– ● –

● *"We're all used to ABC wasting taxpayers' money, but this is outrageous," a spokesman for Australia's Federal Government told reporters in Canberra, "and more than that, it's thoroughly distasteful. A few weeks ago, our national broadcaster was pleading poverty as an excuse for axing their children's news programme. Yet now it seems they have enough money to pay a scientist to teach kids how to break wind more effectively."*

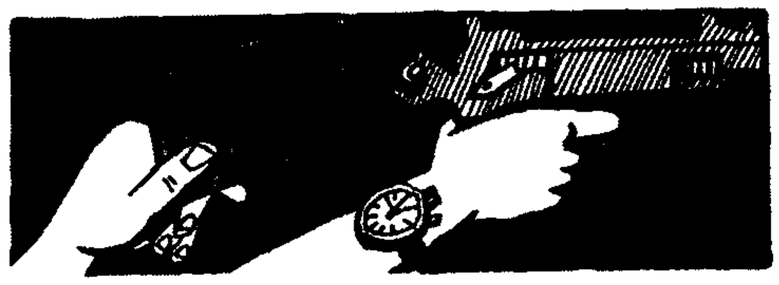
Despite government protests, Dr Karl Kruszelnicki defended his research, which is being funded by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "The average fart is a joyous event," he informed the audience of his children's science show, "yet they're considered so embarrassing that we don't even have a good word for them, just a cold technical term like 'flatus,' or a lot of euphemisms like cutting the cheese or letting one fly. But they're only possible at all thanks to the magnificent job that your wondrous anal sphincter performs about ten times each day without fail, releasing gas without letting any solid or liquid pass through. No other muscle in the body is such a protector of the dignity of man, yet so ready to come to his relief, and I doubt whether any device made by the human race could equal this task, let alone keep doing it for seventy years. It's a miracle."

Dr Kruszelnicki has particularly angered ministers by encouraging children to take part in his "Great Fart Survey, and Great Baked Beans Fart Experiment. We want to know what are the farts of Australia's kids really like? Are we a nation of 'silent but deadlies', or 'machine gunners'? And how much do baked beans really increase your farting ability?" (Sydney Daily Telegraph, 8/7/04. Spotter: David McPhee)

– ● –

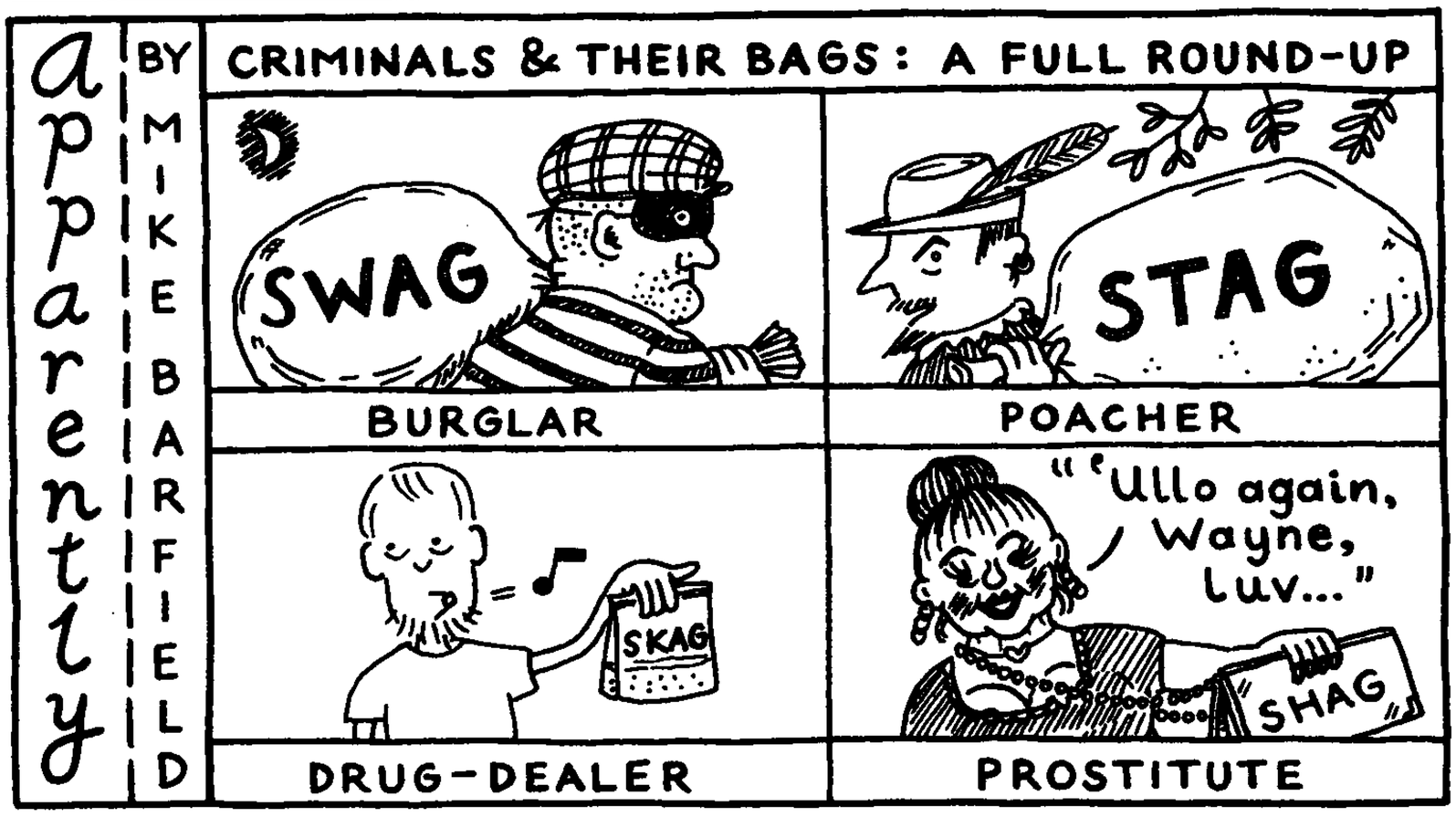
● "The dispute began when the referee awarded a penalty against the visiting team," policewoman Mali Govender told a press conference in Kenton-on-Sea, in South Africa's Eastern Cape. "Some of the Marcelle players protested, and objected when the referee gave one of them a yellow card. An argument broke out, and some of the Marcelle fans stormed the field. That was when the referee pulled out a firearm and began shooting. He shot the Marcelle coach dead, and wounded two of their players, then ran off the pitch screaming 'I am now the master of the universe,' and has not been seen since. We are hunting for him, but he is still on the run. We don't know what his tactics are, because we haven't found him yet."

Later, the South Africa Football Association issued a statement: "It was with regret that Safa



learnt of the fatal shooting of a coach and the injuries to players in a soccer match. However, the referee that officiated in this match was not a properly qualified official registered with Safa, he was one of the spectators who had been asked by the organisers to handle the match. Furthermore, we would like to put on record that the match between Ekuphumuleni and Marcelle was an unofficial village friendly that was not played under the structures of Safa, and we are therefore in no way responsible. Safa passes its condolences to the family of the coach, and wishes a speedy recovery to the injured players." *(South African Press Association, 27/04. Spotter: Stewart Truswell)*

● *In issue 1113 we ran a story about a "pink" Klansman sent in by a number of readers. It turns out that this was a spoof article, not a true news item, which was written by Jennifer Gardner and first published on the Glossy News web site. Apologies for the confusion.*



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And the first thing I want to make clear to you all – as I will be stressing on this week's parish outing to Brighton – is that I'm back!

Not that I have ever been away! No, but some people might have thought I was away, especially when they saw all those pictures of me being away on holiday that Mr Prescott put in this newsletter while I was away!

Anyway, I was never away in any real sense. As it says in the Holy Scripture, "Hey, I am with you always" (*Book of Job For Life*, Chapter 5).

But enough of that. What I want to talk about today – and I want you to talk about it too! – is this week's Good News!

The First Great Crusade is over! Whether you were in favour of it or not, all that is now in the past!

Whatever you thought at the time, whether you were for us or against us, a hawk or a dove – it's over! Done! Finito!, as my friend Monsignor Berlusconi might put it (and, incidentally, memo to Mr Prescott, it was not a *banana* on Silvio's head, it was a *bandana*, which is quite a different thing, as those of us who were fortunate enough to have a proper education know only too well. No offence, John, you fat oik!).

(DO YOU REALLY WANT THIS BIT TO GO IN, TONY? D. Hill. Ed.)

Anyway, as I was saying, let's put the First Crusade behind us!

It really is time to move on, which is why we are now poised to launch our Second Great Crusade, which will be even more glorious and successful than the First Crusade, under the inspired leadership of the same team, including our good friends the Rev. Dubya, Brother Rumsfeld and Sister Condy.

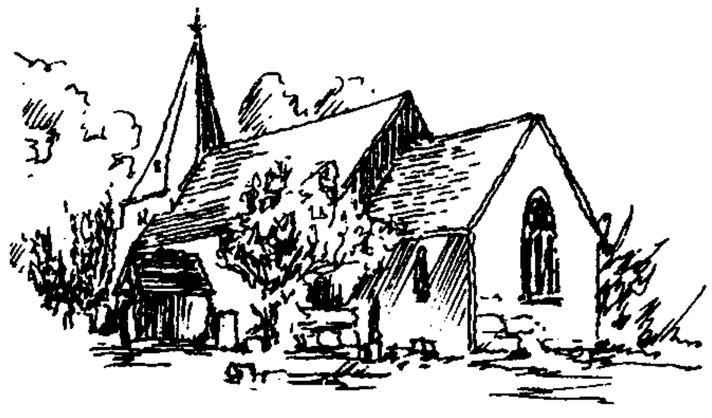
And this time all decent, reasonable, sensible people, I am sure, will be right behind us! Because this time there can be no doubt that we are confronted by pure evil, "awesome in its evilitude", as the Rev. Dubya so memorably put it in his "Mission Accomplished" statement.

Perhaps now that we are all united, we can put this whole question of the war behind us, and start to think about the things which really matter, nearer to home!

Just consider some of the really exciting new initiatives which we are launching this autumn, to mark the beginning of the Church's year!

● Mrs Hewitt's new plan for women to have more babies, and then go out to work.

Patricia will be giving a talk on this important issue at this week's parish outing, including helpful hints on how to make babies with your partner (of either sex, of course!).



● Up With The Fox, Down With The Cruel Foxhunters! Not that I personally have anything against the people who want to hunt with dogs, like our good friend Mrs Mallalieu, which is why I was very careful not to be present at the PCC meeting when this came up for yet another discussion. I honestly think we have talked about this long enough, and it's time to move on and draw a line under it once and for all. So the hunt will definitely not be meeting outside the vicarage after 2012, unless Mr Michael can come up with some rather more helpful compromise in the next few days! Not, of course, that I want in any way to compromise on what I know many of you regard as a core belief in your faith. But for that very reason, I think we'd better just wait and see what happens, shall we?

Obviously, there are plenty of other important topics for us all to talk about this week in Brighton, but I don't want to spoil it all by letting on what they are!

So I hope we're all going to enjoy our week by the seaside, and that no one is going to try to hog the limelight by making a silly, self-serving speech, as happened last year. I don't want to name names, but all of you who were there will remember the man who stood up and tried to pretend that he could do my job better than I can, instead of getting on with the one job he is really fitted for, ie counting up the 2p pieces in the church collection (and probably getting that wrong as well! No offence, Gordon, just my little joke!).

Yours,

Tony

Congratulations!

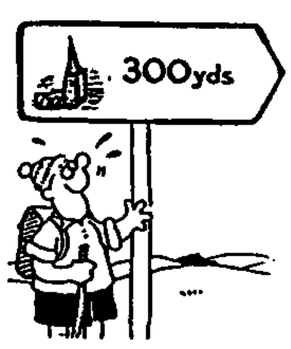
The Vicar's wife has been chosen to give an after-lunch speech to some very important American Pet Insurance agents as a replacement for Lauren Bacall!

What an amazing tribute to Cherie, as a successful woman in her own right, that she is now considered to be in the same league as a Hollywood superstar! She will be talking on the subject "What it's like being married to the Vicar".

Brighton Rock!!!

Undoubtedly the highspot of this week's parish outing will be the chance to see, hear and even meet, the amazing Mr Bono, the now legendary "rocker"-turned-evangelist on behalf of the world's underprivileged. Older parishioners will, of course, remember Mr de Bono ("Ed", as some us know him), who was so famous in the 1980s with his band "Lateral Thinking". I am so excited by the thought of having a real star in our midst, that I am thinking of getting out my trusty old Stratocaster and having a "jam session" with Mr de Bonio! *Rock on!*

St Albion's Ramblers



Mr Michael regrets that he will be unable to join the "Right To Roam" ramble next Tuesday, due to an unprecedented pressure of work. He has had to cancel all his commitments for the foreseeable future, and will spend his time locked in his basement with a six-months' supply of Kendal Mint Cake and bottled water. Parishioners are reminded that the "right to roam" stops at Mr Michael's front door, and the local riot police are already on standby to beat over the head any members of the St Albion's Countryside Alliance who are rash enough to come within 100 metres of Mr Michael's home. You have been warned.

A.M. (PCC Representative for Rambling and Country Issues)

The Leader of the United Reformed Democratic Liberal Church steps up his campaign to take over the parish. By Mr de la Nougerede

Parish Postbag

From Lady Melvina Barg

Dear Sir,

I would like to apologise to the Vicar and his good lady for the totally unforgiveable behaviour of my husband Melvyn for suggesting that Tony was thinking of resigning for family reasons. I don't know what got into Melvyn, or rather I do – a huge quantity of drink! It would be much better for everybody if my husband stuck to what he is good at, ie drinking (Surely "making arts programmes"? D.H.), and left the writing of books with the Vicar's wife to me.

Incidentally, I shall be doing a "signing" with Ms Booth (ie, the Vicar's wife!) in the St Albion's Bookshop, which is behind Dirty Des's Adult Books And Mags Emporium on the High Street, between Tesco and Tesco.

Cherie tells me that attendance is not "compulsory", but she assures me that anyone who does not buy a copy cannot expect to remain in the Vicar's good books for much longer!

Lady Melvina Barg,
Southbank Road.

(The Editor reserves the right to print all letters defending the Vicar in full. D.H.)

From Fiona Millar

Dear Sir,

I was most interested to read the Vicar's wife's new book (written for her by someone else, incidentally!). In the days when I was working for her, she was perfectly sane and sensible. But then she let in that witch
Carol and since then

Yours faithfully,
Fiona Miller (aka Mrs Alastair Campbell, the former editor of the newsletter),
The Old Dossier House,
Hutton Road.

(The Editor reserves the right to cut all letters from disloyal former employees of the Vicar for reasons of space. D.H.)

From Sir Rorold of Bremner

Dear Sir,

I used to be a great admirer of the Vicar when he was very popular, but recently I have noticed that everyone hates him, so it is therefore with deep regret that I shall not be playing tennis with him after the service on a Sunday ever again unless he comes to his senses and becomes very popular again.

Yours insincerely,
Sir Rorold of Bremner
Enfield Road
Luvvies Close.

(The Editor reserves the right to cut all letters from disloyal former friends of the Vicar for reasons of space. D.H.)

GLENDA SLAGG

THE BRIGHTON BELLE! (GEDDIT?)

■ SHED A TEAR for poor Billie 'n' Chris!?!? That's Evans and Piper, stoopid!?!? We thought their marriage would last forever! He – successful middle-aged TV millionaire. She – the 17-year-old pop sensation. Who would have thought that their love would wither and die after their flame had burned so brightly for so long?!?

I would have been more surprised if the Rock of Gibraltar had melted into the sea, apes and all, rather than read that Billie 'n' Chris would not walk arm in arm down Lovers' Lane into old age for ever – and so much in love?!?! Gulp!?!?

■ BILLIE AND CHRIS!?!? I told you it wouldn't last!?!? The marriage of this pissed-up Grandad and his child bride was as likely to last as the Rock of Gibraltar is to melt into the sea, apes and all?!?! If ever there was a mismatch, this was it!?!? He – the washed-up DJ with a drink problem and money to burn. She – the star-crazed teenage golddigger. They were hardly going to walk arm in arm down Lovers' Lane into old age for ever, were they? And, as for love – pull the other one, Mister!?!?!?!

■ HATS OFF to Britney Spears and the lucky geezer she's just got hitched to?!?!? Now *there's* a marriage that's going to last for ever!?!?! Trust me, they are so much in love that Madam Glenda is looking into her crystal ball and ordering champagne to toast their silver wedding anniversary!??!?

■ HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Sophia Loren, the dark-eyed diva who's more sexy at seventy than all the others put together!?!? This sultry sex siren of the silver screen proves that us mature gals can still have the fellas a-groanin' and a-moanin', a-dribblin' and a-wibblin', a-peerin' and a-leerin' *(That's enough. Ed.)*

Saluté Senora Loren! You are an inspirazzione to all us Senoritas who are looking at the wrong side of 69!?!?! Geddit!!?!

Buenas noches, Sophia, on your big day!?!?

■ HERE THEY ARE – Glenda's 'Fall' Guys!?! Geddit?!?!

● **Alan Titchmarsh** – There's an Area of Natural Beauty you might want to explore with your green fingers!?!? *(You're fired. Ed.)*

● **Rolf Harris** – I'll be your Mona Lisa, Rolfie, but make sure you bring your didgeridoo to give me that certain smile!?!?! *(You're still fired. Ed.)*

● **Cat Stevens** – Don't worry, Beardy – I'll let *you* in anytime!?!?!? *(Clear your desk immediately. Ed.*

Byeeee!!!

THE NEW PANORAMA

How It Will Look

Billie Piper *(for it is she)*: Good evening. Tonight we'll be looking at the PFI initiative and how it is affecting public services in Eastenders. Then Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott will be talking to Graham Norton about Labour's ambitious plans for regional assemblies. But first, an in depth investigation into how handbag manufacturers are ripping off British celebrities.

(Film of scantily clad models carrying expensive handbags)

Norton: Coming up next how a pound of pork sausages got an endowment mortgage! Join us after the break, oops, is that the other side?

© *BBC 2004.*

EUPHEMISMS: No. 94 Fraud

THE FRAUD INVESTIGATION WILL TAKE SOME TIME
I WILL NEED A LARGE TEAM TO ERADICATE NEPOTISM
I AM THE MAN TO ROOT OUT CORRUPTION
RSJ

Long enough to move your money to Switzerland

I have a lot of cousins to employ

Give me a lucrative sinecure

Letters *to the Editor*

Liberty under threat

SIR – As one of many millions of patriotic pro-hunt protestors who travelled to London to exercise their democratic right to stage a peaceful demonstration in Parliament Square, I would like to put it on record that our once-admired British police force behaved with all the savagery of Nazi stormtroopers in some third-world banana republic, which is surely what we are heading for under the despotic dictatorship of the Fascist Blair and his grinning wife Evita, who personally ordered their Stasi-trained riot police to hit me over the head with their truncheons when my only "offence" was to have asked one of them "Excuse me, officer, is this the way to Parliament Square?".

Norman Voletrouser
The Old Cottage Hospital, Bigglesworth, Beds

SIR – I wish to salute the six brave and high-spirited young chaps who had the nerve and the wit to invade the House of Commons in order to exercise their democratic right to protest against the most iniquitous piece of legislation that has been forced on the British people. These heroic young men, reminiscent of the 20-year-olds who saved Britain in the summer of 1940, offered no threat to anyone, and when asked to leave, did so without any fuss and with the same good manners that they showed on entering the chamber. I say "Hats off" to these gallant champions of democracy.

Lucinda Topes
The Old Ferry, Ringworm, Hants

Letters

Democracy at risk

As one of the many millions of ordinary television viewers who oppose hunting, can I record my pleasure and delight in seeing the bloodied faces of the elderly and privileged toffs who the police quite rightly beat over the head for trying to thwart the democratically expressed will of the people by opposing the totally justified ban on hunting with dogs. Now these arrogant Tories know how the miners felt when they were gunned down by Thatcher's armed militia during the poll tax riots at Wapping, not to mention how the fox feels when it is torn apart limb from limb by braying members of the landed gentry and other friends of the Royal family. At last Blair has done something decent, to atone for his war crimes (on the subject of which I have written to you on a number of previous occasions).

Steve Beard
The Old Squat, Hackney

● The outrageous and sickening breach of security by six public school-educated hoorays in breaking into the Mother of Parliaments shows how vital it is to have a complete overhaul of the antiquated so-called "security system" operated by men in tights, many of whom also went to public schools. What would have happened if these intruders had been fully paid-up suicide bombers from Al Qaeda exercising their democratic right to protest against the war in Iraq, er, to my mind these irresponsible toff anarchists should have been shot on sight. Then they'd know how the fox feels when it is being torn apart limb from limb by the Duke of Edinburgh.

Dave Rollup
The New Squat, Islington

Who are they – the countryside six who brought democracy to its knees?

Jeremy Ravenscroft-Starborgling, 18, a close friend of Prince Harry's. Educated at St Cakes, the famous Midlands public school. Jeremy's father is Master of the Dumpster Hunt in Devon.

Rupert Starborgling-Ravenscroft, 19, a close friend of Prince William's, who plays polo for the Old Cakeians. His father, Sir Hugo Greenwelly, is Master of the Massingberd Foxhounds in Leicestershire.

Kevin Prole, 21, not a close friend of any member of the Royal Family. Educated at the Chuter Ede Comprehensive in Slough, Prole runs a fashionable Chelsea bistro, "Les Deux Sausages Avec Frites". *(That's enough toffs, Ed.)*

BREAKTHROUGH IN VIRGIN TRAIN TECHNOLOGY

by Our Rail Staff

A DELIGHTED Richard Branson cracked open the champagne at Manchester's Piccadilly Station yesterday when one of his trains arrived at a station.

"It's incredible," he said. "This train is an entirely new concept. It is based on the idea that a train should leave London and arrive at its destination. This engineering feat has taken a long time to develop, but we are delighted to see it in action at Virgin."

The Tilting Train is ten years late.

My eBay

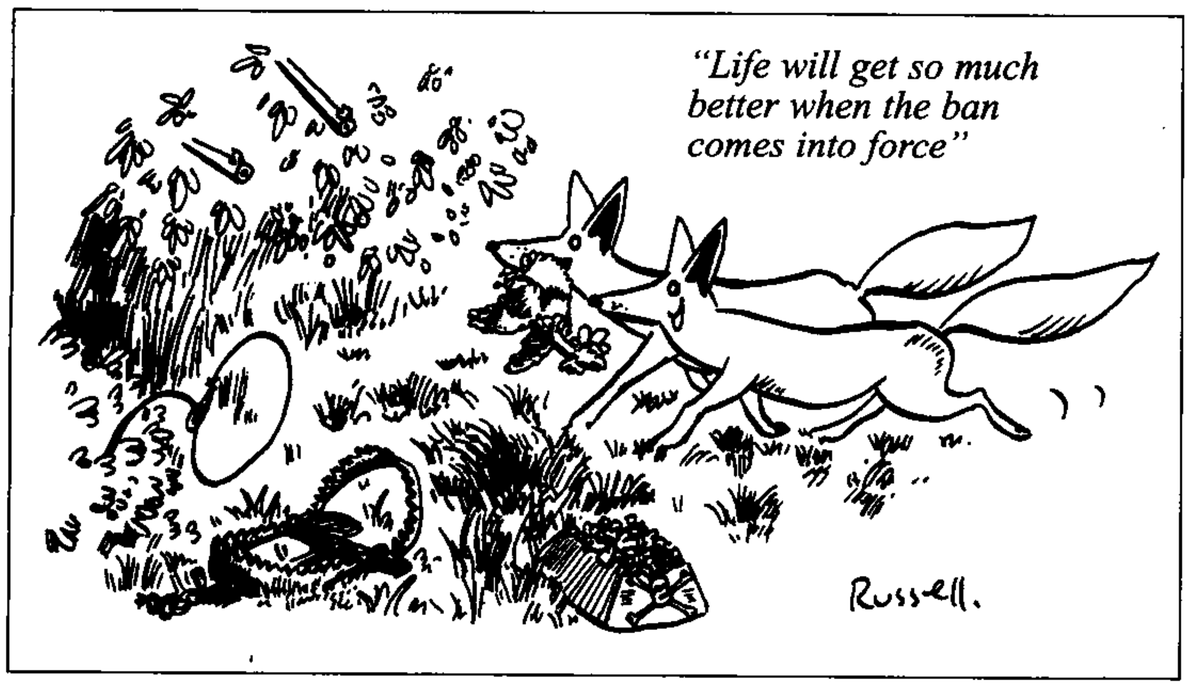
gd-xdg&dg2b! (625)

Items I'm Bidding On (1-3 of 3 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐ 'History of Voodoo – A Practical Guide' / Hardback	£9.99	£1.50	1
☐ 8x10 signed photo Alastair Campbell	£14.99	£3.00	1
☐ Dartboard and set of darts	£2.99	£1.50	1

Items I'm Selling (1-3 of 3 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐ Desk-tidy, in/out tray, assorted paper-weights – all good cond.	£4.99	£2.50	0
☐ Gold-plated carriage clock in presentation box – unwanted gift	£2.99	£5.00	0
☐ 50,000 'Cut The Crap' cards – genuine BBC memorabilia – rare item!	£2.99	£20.00	0



A PRIVATE EYE ASSAULT ON IRAQ SPECIAL

A LETTER FROM JONATHAN AITKEN'S LAWYER *with footnotes*

A PRIVATE EYE REPORT
ROCK BOTTOM

ho bombed the Israeli embassy?

PRIVATE EYE

SPECIAL REPORT BY PAUL FOOT

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Crack-Up

The Artful Dodgers

FOOTNOTES
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RICHARD THE FAINT

footnotes

THE BRIDGEWATER APPEAL

JUSTICES SEEN TO BE DONE

footnotes

The Colin Wallace story

DIAL MoD FOR...?

Paul Foot and The Eye

By Richard Ingrams

"These are the things that people do not know
They do not know because they are not told"
(Hilaire Belloc)

Paul Foot joined the staff of *Private Eye* in February 1967. I had worked with him on magazines at Oxford where he edited *Isis*, causing a storm when he began to publish reviews of dons' lectures – the proctors soon put a stop to it, claiming that one lady don had suffered a nervous breakdown as a result. When he left Oxford he went to Glasgow to work on the *Scottish Daily Record*: "I had been sent up there by Hugh Cudlipp, and was patronised everywhere as another toffee-nosed careerist sent up to pretend to get his fingers dirty before going back to London to sidle his way to the top."

It was in Glasgow that Paul, who up till then, following the Foot family tradition, had been a Liberal, became a fully-fledged Marxist among those youthful shipworkers and engineers who were members of the Young Socialists. A fellow crusader was a young Scotsman, Gus Macdonald, later a senior executive at Granada and, later still, Lord Macdonald, a minister in Tony Blair's government. Gus remembered Paul in the Young Socialists Hall in Traveston haranguing the young militants on the dangers of an accidental nuclear war, only to be rebuked from the floor – "Comrade Foot must understand that wars are not caused by accident but by capitalism."

When I wrote to Paul in the days when *Private Eye* was germinating, urging him to come and join, he wrote back (rather pompously, as he admitted later), "I'm part of a movement now." It did not stop him, however, from coming back to London in 1964 to join the staff of the new-look, short-lived *Sun* which was being launched by Hugh Cudlipp. Copying the successful *Sunday Times* "Insight" feature, Cudlipp had formed a "Probe" team, but Paul became disillusioned when, after he proposed a feature on capital punishment, the head of the Probe team told him to approach the subject purely from an economic point of view – "How much does the execution cost the nation?" He then joined the Mandrake column on the *Sunday Telegraph*, which was where he met his second wife Rose.

The young Paul Foot at a Private Eye cricket match

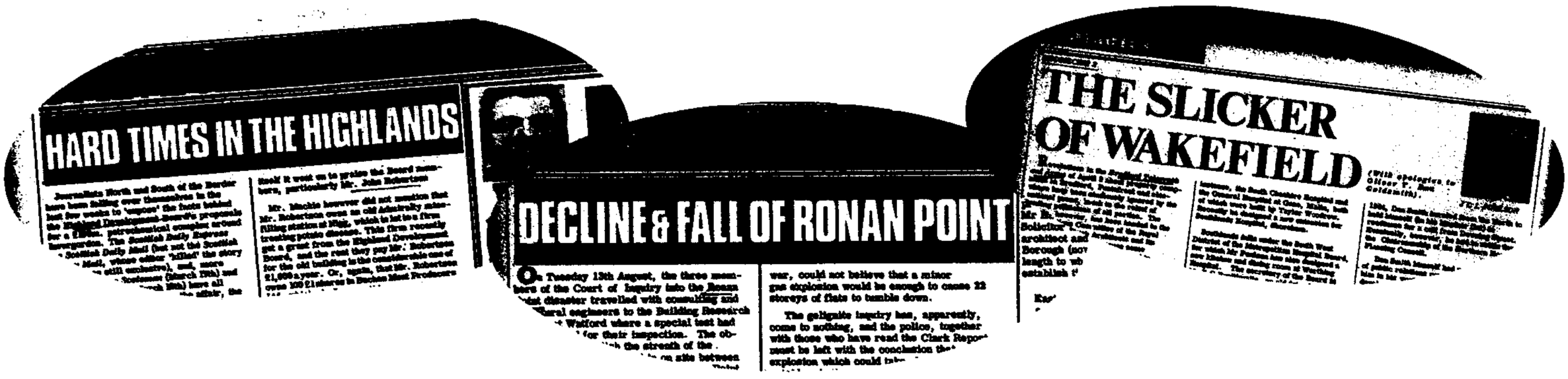
In the meantime, he had been contributing regularly to the *Eye* and in February 1967 he joined the staff – "seduced by the juicy bait of two pages which I had to fill all by myself". The "serious" part of the *Eye* had been inaugurated a year or two earlier by Claud Cockburn whom I introduced to Paul in the flat he was renting in Cornwall Gardens. Paul had been reading the Russian anarchist Victor Serge and enthused about him to Claud who would have none of it: "Absolute rot!" he exploded, establishing at a stroke the doctrinal gap between the young Trotskyite and the old Stalinist.

Jolly Beating Weather

Like all well-connected revolutionaries, Paul felt obliged to tell the world that he hated his schooldays. In fact, he enjoyed his time at Shrewsbury, joining in the sporting activities, the debating society, the concert choir.

The only blot on the landscape was his housemaster, the notorious Anthony Chenevix Trench (right), later headmaster of Eton. Trench was a sadistic pederast and the young Paul was one of his victims. As he was reading Classics, Trench, a famous classical scholar, offered to help him with his prepared work: "He announced that if there were fewer than three mistakes in the work, I would get a piece of chocolate. If more than three mistakes, a beating... Trench explained that I had a choice: the cane with trousers on or the strap with trousers off. There was no choice really, though Trench enormously enjoyed watching me make it."

In 1969, Paul was able to get his own back on Chenevix Trench, by now headmaster of Eton, when we were visited at the *Eye*'s Greek Street office by Hume Shawcross, young son of the well-known lawyer Lord Shawcross, who had recently been expelled from Eton, along with Caspar Fleming, son of Bond-creator Ian. The resulting Footnote story, titled "Jolly Beating Weather", described recent goings-on at Eton and the headmaster's increasing reliance on the cane. Paul ended, "Rumours that Mr Trench will be retiring as Eton headmaster this summer were being strenuously denied in official circles this Easter" (*Eye* 191). Three months later Eton parents received a letter informing them that the headmaster was retiring as from August 1970, though this did not stop him being given another headmastership at Tony Blair's old school, Fettes.



Journalistically, however, the two had much in common. During his guest editorship, Claud had written a scoop, the story of an artist Hal Woolf who had died in suspicious circumstances in police custody. His widow had trudged round Fleet Street with her story, having no success until she visited Claud at his home in Ireland. What impressed Paul about Claud was his willingness to "listen to the nutters", those unfortunate characters, like Mrs Woolf, who besiege the press with convoluted stories of injustice and persecution. Time and again he would realise that mixed up in the exaggeration and confusion there was an important story. Over the years he developed an almost infallible instinct for distinguishing the wheat from the chaff: "I have discovered two basic rules – 1) the man who says he has a great story before he tells you his great story does not have a great story; 2) the person who says immediately that he doesn't want money for his information wants money for the information."

Common to the journalism of Cockburn and Foot was the assumption that these were stories which you were not going to read in the national press. The reasons were many – the libel laws, pressures from advertisers, or the notorious lobby system (which still prevails) whereby groups of journalists band together and are briefed by the authorities, on condition that they never reveal the source of their information and with the implied threat that if they step out of line they will be blackballed from the club. Such a system operates not only in politics but in other areas as well – notably crime, where the police find it easy to get their version of events into the press. One reason Paul was almost alone in revealing that Concorde would never pay its way was that the aeronautical correspondents were all in league with the industry.

What was impressive about Paul throughout his long career was his willingness to explore stories in all kinds of areas, not just politics and big business – although these were the mainstay of his operation – but stories in those early years such as Concorde, heart transplants (the subject of the first of a series of special *Eye* supplements), or the collapse of the Ronan Point tower block in Newham. In each case, usually with the help of a single trusted insider, Paul not only mastered a complicated, often highly technical, brief but was able to explain it to the readers in relatively simple language. Steeped as he was in the great radical writers of the past – Paine, Cobbett and Orwell – he set great store always on the importance of good, clear writing, even when dealing with something like engineering, as in Ronan Point.

The highlight of those early years, which helped to boost the *Eye*'s reputation as the purveyor of news rather than simply jokes, was the first full account in May 1970 of what became known as the Poulson Affair – a web of corruption centred around a hitherto-unknown Pontefract architect, John Poulson, involving Westminster politicians and local councillors all over the country, most notably the Tory deputy leader Reginald Maudling, who was later forced to resign as Home Secretary in the Heath government (1970-74).

It was our first experience of a familiar pattern – the exposure by the *Eye* of what looked like a truly sensational story, only for us to find that it was completely ignored by the national press (which only began to take an interest in Poulson when he was later declared a bankrupt). Exactly the same thing happened recently when Paul revealed the

Peter and Paul

Paul always had a close rapport with the *Eye*'s former proprietor Peter Cook, but it was not until he read Harry Thompson's biography of Peter (1997) that he realised how much the two had in common: "We were born in the same week into the same sort of family. His father, like mine, was a colonial servant rushing round the world hauling down the imperial flag. Both fathers shipped their eldest sons back to public school education in England. We both spent our school holidays with popular aunts and uncles in the West Country..."

Paul took issue with Jonathan Miller when, in the same book, he was quoted describing Cook as "the most upstanding, traditional upholder of everything English and everything Establishment". On the contrary, Paul insisted, Cook had always been his greatest supporter, taking a special interest in the Hanratty story: "When I took the case up in the late 1960s, he positively bombarded me with inquisitive support."

He particularly remembered Peter agreeing to give the prizes at an Anti-Nazi League fete in north London, confiding afterwards, "It's not often that I do something worthwhile".

Inland Revenue's sale of some of its properties to a company registered in Bermuda for tax purposes.

Michael Gillard (Slicker) writes: "Three decades have dimmed recognition of just how seismic were the Poulson shock waves to British public life. They forced the resignation of Home Secretary Reginald Maudling and implicated three MPs. More than 30 prosecutions resulted in the jailing of T. Dan Smith, the most influential Labour figure in local government; senior Scottish civil servant George Pottinger; plus innumerable leading local councillors, officials and top trade union figures. No subsequent corruption scandal has rivalled Poulson's scope or impact."

Paul had his fair share of legal battles over the years, one of which – the case of the Ballsoff Memorandum – had its origins in the Poulson affair. In 1971, the lobby correspondent of the *Observer*, Nora Beloff, who was friendly with Reginald Maudling, wrote a long memo to her editor David Astor proposing that she should defend Maudling against the *Eye*'s attack, she having recently been told by Maudling's colleague William Whitelaw that all the *Eye* stories were lies. Astor gave his approval, much to the anger of the *Observer*'s business staff – one of whom leaked her memo to Paul who reproduced it *in toto* in his *Footnotes*. Beloff was furious and, unable to sue for libel, brought an action instead, with the support of David Astor, for breach of copyright. The implications of the action were obvious because if she and Astor succeeded it would mean that in future any paper that published any private letter or memorandum would be liable to prosecution. This would include the *Observer* which, we were able to show, was regularly in the habit of publishing such documents. Eventually after a long hearing the Beloff claim was dismissed.

Paul spent much of his life dealing with lawyers and judges and his experiences in the *Eye*'s actions did nothing to alter his generally low opinion of the judiciary. Notable was the 1967 action brought by two *People* reporters Hugh Farmer and Dennis Cassidy. Paul had written a story told him by a Scottish anarchist, Stuart Christie, recently released from prison in Spain where he had been found with explosives, apparently intending to blow up General Franco. On his return to the UK Christie had sold his story to the *People* and the two reporters assigned to the story accompanied him to his home town of Glasgow where they spent the night on the town, ending up in a brothel where Christie had sex with a prostitute at the *People*'s expense. It was not a very serious story but we were already used to the regrettable habit of journalists suing for libel. In the ensuing court case the two reporters not only denied Christie's story but produced a detailed alibi for their movements on the night in question, which included a visit to a restaurant called the Epicure which, they said on oath, they found to be full and therefore opted instead for fish and chips. Great was our joy when we discovered that on the night in question, a public holiday, the restaurant had been closed. The judge, Mr Justice Brabin, admitted that the journalists' evidence was "unsatisfactory", but nevertheless came down on their side, awarding £500 damages each.

In 1972 Paul decided to leave *Private Eye* and work full-time for the *Socialist Worker*. In one of his obituaries it was stated that he had fallen out with me over a proposed *Eye* cover showing his friend and fellow-Socialist Bernadette Devlin *(see opposite)*. I had, in fact, agreed to drop the cover, though I was told later that Bernadette had been quite amused by the joke. The real reason for his departure was more to do with the political situation at the

Best In The Eye

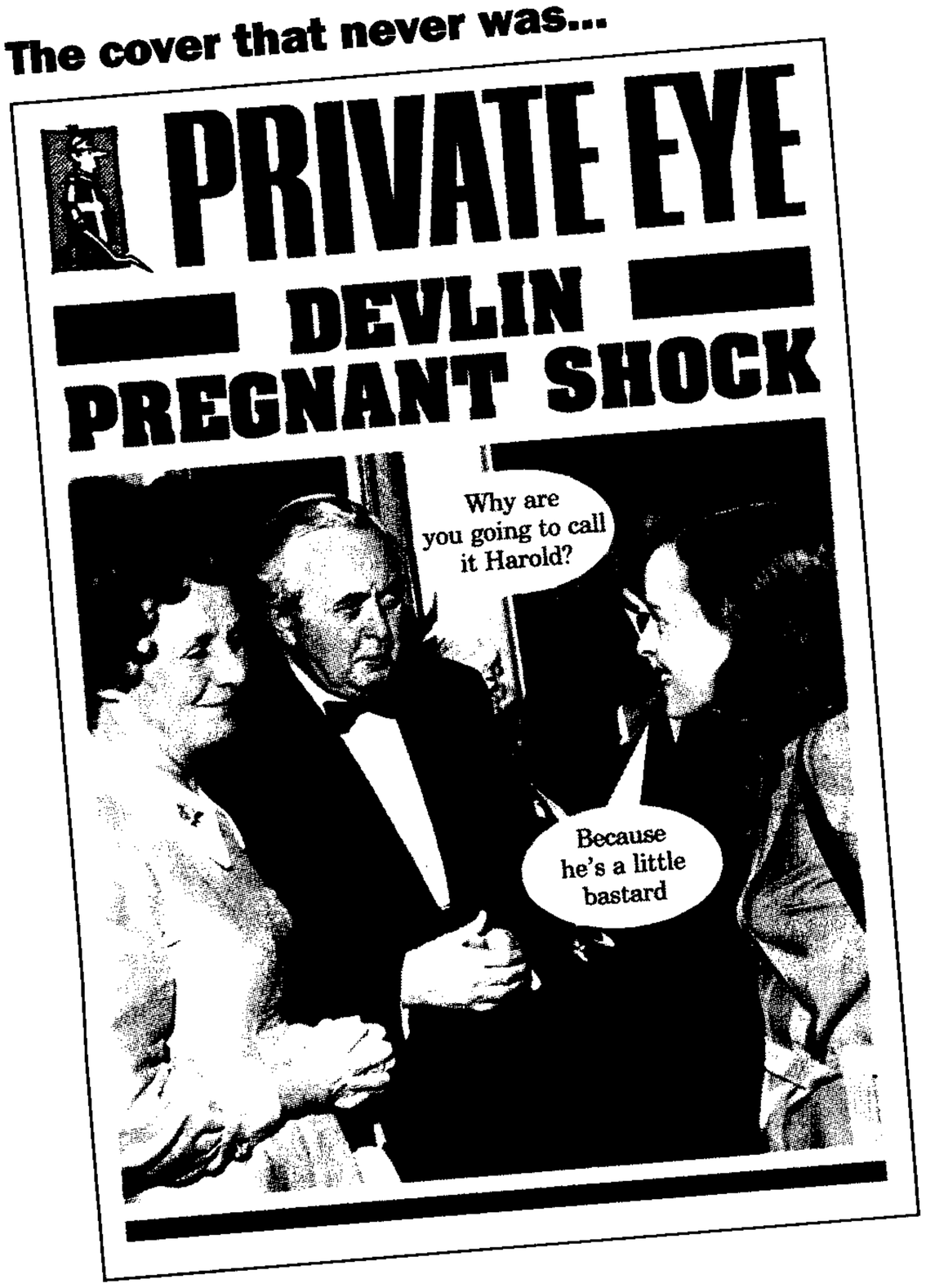
"The first words – it was April 1962, the then 24-year-old Paul Foot in his first job with the *Glasgow Daily Record* – addressed to me were blunt, quizzical, legitimate but curiously neither aggressive nor rude: "How come that a constituent branch of the National Union of Mineworkers should nominate you, an Old Etonian, for the election conference in West Lothian?"

Few journalists ever drive quicker to a point that required to be addressed than Paul! He was free from cant and evasion.

On reflection, I think that the best vintage Paul Foot journalism was done not for the *Record*, not the *Mirror*, not the *Guardian*, but for *Private Eye*. Perhaps the reason is that you at the *Eye* gave him the opportunity to go into untruncated detail. Were I asked to identify the most telling piece of investigative journalism in my 42 years as an MP, it would have to be Paul Foot's special *Private Eye* supplement on Lockerbie."

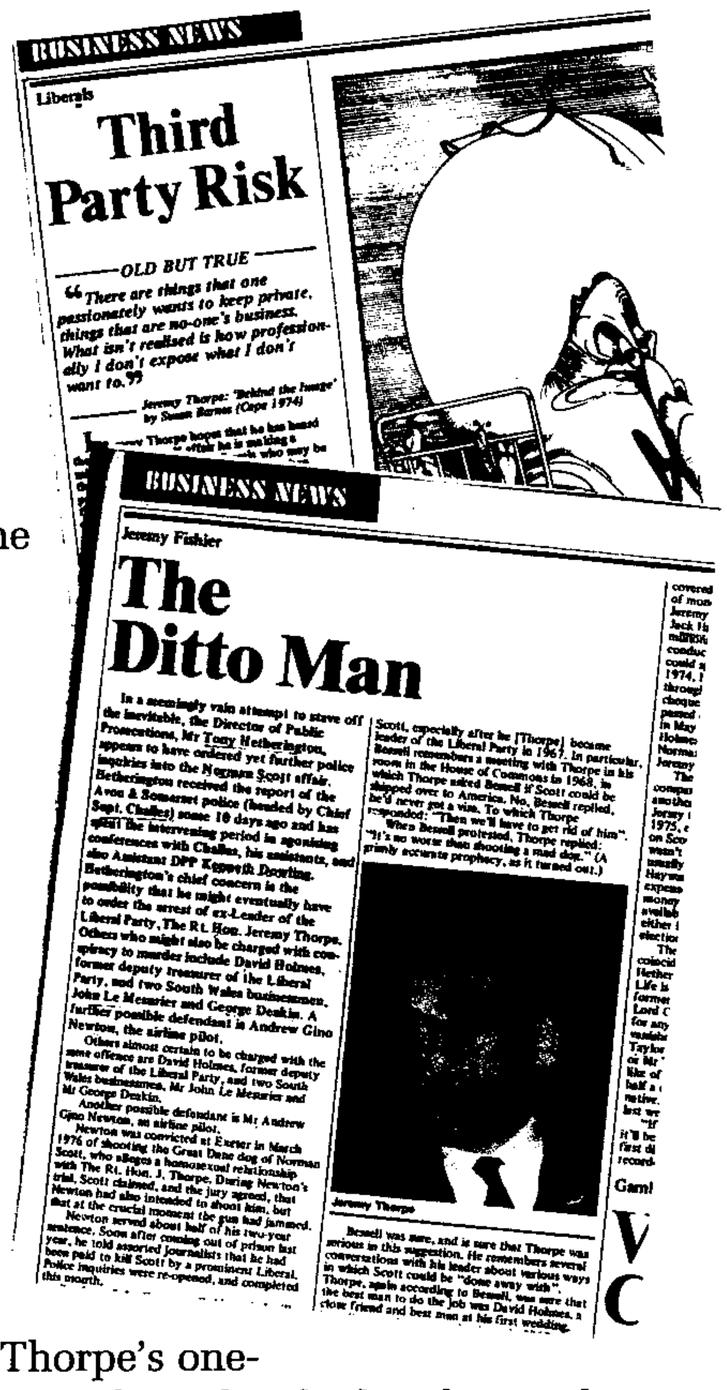
TAM DALYELL MP

The cover that never was...



time. With a Tory government under Edward Heath and a worsening economic situation, many left-wingers like Paul felt that the system was on the verge of collapse and that the hoped-for revolution might well be on the cards.

It turned out to be a false dawn and in the meantime Paul found himself taking up stories which had no real place in the pages of the *Socialist Worker*. When, after the disastrous three-day week, Labour was returned in 1974 there was a plethora of political scandals involving Wilson, Marcia Williams and, later, Jeremy Thorpe. The press were slow to pursue Thorpe, some editors like Harold Evans believing that he was the victim of anti-gay prejudice. The feeling was the same in the upper reaches of the BBC, headed by the recently appointed DG Ian Trethowan, who was a friend of Thorpe's. All the same, a *Panorama* producer Gordon Carr and his reporters continued to pursue the story, having established a close relationship with Det. Supt. Challes of the Avon & Somerset Police, the man in charge of the police investigation. The regular flow of *Footnotes* chronicling the slow progress of the police investigation undoubtedly kept the pot boiling in the face of strong official opposition from Thorpe's friends in high places. The campaign culminated in an article, "The Ditto Man" (*Eye* 433), which predicted the imminent arrest of Thorpe and his fellow members in the alleged conspiracy to murder Thorpe's one-time lover Norman Scott. (The police had nicknamed Thorpe the Ditto Man after he told them that he had been advised to say nothing and thereafter repeated the single word "ditto" to every question asked.) I remember Paul taking me out of the office for a walk in Covent Garden to tell me he was going to predict Thorpe's imminent arrest in the next issue. It is not every day that the leader of one of our political parties is accused by the police of murder, so any news to this effect was sensational and obviously risky. I had such faith in Paul's judgement that I had no qualms about publishing, though some readers were alarmed, especially when Thorpe issued a writ for libel, while his solicitor Sir David Napley sent a copy of "The Ditto Man" to the Director of Public Prosecutions for his immediate action. The panic subsided when two weeks later Thorpe was indeed arrested, although he was later acquitted thanks to a friendly judge and the brilliant advocacy of his defending counsel, George Carman. Carman later became a friend of Paul's, supplying him with much useful information, often about those clients of his that he did not like – eg Mohamed Fayed.


BUSINESS NEWS

Liberals

Third Party Risk

OLD BUT TRUE

"There are things that one passionately wants to keep private, things that are no-one's business. What isn't realised is how professionally I don't expose what I don't want to."

Jeremy Thorpe: 'Behind the Image' by Susan Barnes (Cape 1974)

BUSINESS NEWS

Jeremy Fisher

The Ditto Man

In a seemingly vain attempt to stave off the inevitable, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Tony Hetherington, appears to have ordered yet further police inquiries into the Norman Scott affair. Hetherington received the report of the Avon & Somerset police (headed by Chief Supt. Challes) some 10 days ago and has spent the intervening period in agonising conferences with Challes, his assistants, and also Assistant DPP Kenneth Bourne. Hetherington's chief concern is the possibility that he might eventually have to order the arrest of ex-Leader of the Liberal Party, The Rt. Hon. Jeremy Thorpe. Others who might also be charged with conspiracy to murder include David Holmes, former deputy treasurer of the Liberal Party, and two South Wales businessmen, John Le Mesurier and George Deakin. A further possible defendant is Andrew Gino Newton, the airline pilot.

Others almost certain to be charged with the same offence are David Holmes, former deputy treasurer of the Liberal Party, and two South Wales businessmen, Mr John Le Mesurier and Mr George Deakin.

Another possible defendant is Mr Andrew Gino Newton, an airline pilot.

Newton was convicted at Exeter in March 1976 of shooting the Great Dane dog of Norman Scott, who alleges a homosexual relationship with The Rt. Hon. J. Thorpe. During Newton's trial, Scott claimed, and the jury agreed, that Newton had also intended to shoot him, but that at the crucial moment the gun had jammed.

Newton served about half of his two-year sentence. Soon after coming out of prison last year, he told assorted journalists that he had been paid to kill Scott by a prominent Liberal. Police inquiries were re-opened, and completed this month.

Scott, especially after he [Thorpe] became leader of the Liberal Party in 1967. In particular, Bessell remembers a meeting with Thorpe in his room in the House of Commons in 1968, in which Thorpe asked Bessell if Scott could be shipped over to America. No, Bessell replied, he'd never get a visa. To which Thorpe responded: "Then we'll have to get rid of him".

When Bessell protested, Thorpe replied: "It's no worse than shooting a mad dog." (A grimly accurate prophecy, as it turned out.)

Jeremy Thorpe

Bessell was sure, and is sure that Thorpe was serious in this suggestion. He remembers several conversations with his leader about various ways in which Scott could be "done away with". Thorpe, again according to Bessell, was sure that the best man to do the job was David Holmes, a close friend and best man at his first wedding.

Gam

V

C

As Good As Orwell

"Good prose is like a window pane," Paul Foot, quoting George Orwell, one of his heroes, constantly reminded me – the first of many things I learned about journalism from Paul, when struggling to turn myself from bean-counter to hack.

An obsession with the arms-to-Iraq affair led to collaboration with Paul on covering the Scott Inquiry for the *Eye*, which culminated in *Not The Scott Report* (written in part with his then baby daughter on his knee), for which we won the 1994 George Orwell prize for Journalism. The judges, much to Paul's delight, described the report as "a model of Orwell-like writing", which was nearly all his doing. But he told me to keep the trophy, which was typical of his generosity.

An aspiring journalist could not have had a finer mentor than Paul. The mere process of working with him was highly instructive. But three very simple lessons stand out. First, put your questions in writing; if they are unanswerable without lies or self-incrimination on the part of the addressee, so much the better. Second, use their rhetoric against them; "them" being any crook, liar or hypocrite whom you are after. Third, let the facts speak for themselves.

Above all, Paul taught me that journalism could be fun. Or to be more precise, working with him always made me laugh. How could it not when an *Eye* article that we wrote ("Another little lie from Jonathan Aitken MP") produced a writ for libel from a master-perjurer?

As a friend he was always solicitous. "How are they treating you?" he used to ask after I got a job on a magazine that praises the wonders of capitalism, as though that might be incompatible with being a good employer.

Working with Paul was a huge privilege.

TIM LAXTON

"While Paul and I were in much the same line of business – exposing miscarriages of criminal justice – and occasionally corresponded on various cases, I only met him once, at a *Private Eye* lunch. After the other guests had gone, we sat chatting for an hour or so, lamenting police corruption, judicial complacency and the deep-seated flaws of our insufficient adversary system of justice.

He was a great campaigner for truth and his death greatly diminishes the ranks of those of us who hold the beliefs that he did."

LUDOVIC KENNEDY

Bryn Estyn

PAUL first wrote about the Bryn Estyn approved school near Wrexham in Clwyd in 1997. His source was a courageous social worker, Alison Taylor. She writes:

"By nature, I am cautious about people, reserving judgement until, one way or another, they have proved themselves. Paul Foot, then, was one of a kind – I both liked and trusted him on sight.

I used to be a senior childcare social worker in north Wales and, in 1987, was sacked for reporting child abuse allegations to the police. What happened afterwards, to culminate in the North Wales Child Abuse Tribunal of Enquiry, has been extensively documented, not least by Paul in *Private Eye* and, in 1998, in the *Mail on Sunday*. We must not forget, however, that the Inquiry would never have taken place had not Paul and a few other courageous journalists kept up pressure on the government and the Welsh Office.

Paul had no hidden agenda, either personal or journalistic. He was straight, incisive, clear-thinking, with an excellent grasp of very complex issues and a shrewd understanding of personalities. His career was motivated by a desire to right injustice – not for personal glory but for conscience – and I doubt that he ever allowed emotion, bias or preconception to cloud his judgement.

Shortly after the Inquiry reported in 2000, the *New Statesman* resurrected the well-worn and, by then, completely discredited claims that I had fabricated abuse allegations and "persuaded" various youngsters to do the same. Once again rushing in where angels would fear to tread, I started libel proceedings as a litigant in person. When I later told Paul, he quietly set about arranging free legal advice for me, which was crucial to the successful outcome of my action. Knowing Paul, I am probably not alone in having had his whole-hearted and unobtrusive assistance.

My son and his fiancée also met Paul and both were deeply impressed by his warmth and honesty. I was struck over and again by his integrity and his courage – both in pursuing his beliefs and in the way he handled a devastating illness. He was that rarity, a good soul, and he made a genuine difference. I shall miss him."

ALISON TAYLOR

Many of Paul's stories followed the same lines as the Thorpe saga and were more in the nature of campaigns, strung out often over several years. The longest was his campaign to exonerate James Hanratty, hanged in 1962 for the so-called A6 murder. Paul's book *Who Killed Hanratty?* was published in 1971 but the story refused to die down even when in 2002 the Court of Appeal reasserted Hanratty's guilt in the face of supposedly incontestable DNA evidence. Paul, remembering the faulty forensic evidence in the Birmingham Six case, refused to concede defeat, insisting that nothing was known about the history of the exhibits that the government scientists had relied on.

Michael, Hanratty's brother, writes: "Paul was a great friend to the Hanratty family for more than 35 years. He was always there for Mum and Dad – he gave 150% of his time. He spent about four years researching the Rhyl alibi alone... I thought of him as a brother rather than a journalist. And he was genuine – one of the nicest people I've met."

Following his death there have been a great many such tributes from those Paul helped, notably Ann Whelan, mother of one of the four men wrongfully convicted in November 1979 of the murder of newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater. Although Paul wrote about this originally in the *Daily Mirror* (1979), the fight for justice went on so long that the story spilled over into the *Eye*, culminating in the eventual release of the three surviving men in February 1997. It was perhaps his happiest moment and a framed picture of the freed men outside the law courts occupied pride of place in his office at the *Eye (below)*.

Like an errant husband returning to his wife, Paul kept coming back to *Private Eye* during the course of his long career. He was drawn back not just to the freedom that the *Eye* gave him to write as he wanted but to the camaraderie of a small magazine and especially the atmosphere of jokes and satire which he especially enjoyed and which was rather lacking in the offices of the *Socialist Worker*. In 1979, however, when he returned for a brief period, he was not quite so happy. There were new faces at Greek Street with whom he did not see eye to eye and when in 1979 the editor of the *Daily Mirror*, Mike Molloy, offered him a weekly column he accepted, attracted by the idea of a large working-class readership. This brief period at the *Eye* had one important consequence, however, as it launched what was to be another of his lengthy campaigns – the story of Helen Smith, a 23-year-old nurse who died, apparently after

falling off a balcony at a party in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The original story was submitted to the *Eye* by Jack Lundin, a freelance journalist then working in Jeddah who had met Helen's father Ron when he first went to Saudi to discover how his daughter had died. Paul, who took up the story, was to spend endless hours with Ron Smith, a former Leeds policeman obsessed with the need to discover the truth about his daughter. He never did, although he did achieve, with Paul's help, a remarkable success in finally forcing the authorities to hold an inquest in Britain, the jury returning an open verdict. Paul remained convinced that the cover-up by the Foreign Office had had something to do with a private visit to Saudi, coinciding with Helen's death, of HRH Princess Margaret. It was a story that he was sadly never able to confirm.

Paul was to stay at the *Daily Mirror* for fourteen years thanks, in the main, to a friendly and admiring supporter in Richard Stott who took over the editorship in 1985 and who was strong enough to protect his star columnist from the *Mirror*'s bungling and crooked proprietor Robert Maxwell. After Maxwell's death in 1992, however, the paper fell into the hands of the equally unattractive Ulsterman David Montgomery whose idea of making the paper profitable was to sack most of the journalists. Paul was once again left with nowhere to go

Footy

"It was his sense of fun which made him so refreshing, and distinct from investigative reporters inclined towards obsessiveness and paranoia. Even on the trail of a shocking scandal, Footy always saw an element of human comedy and even farce behind it. He loved ridiculing the humbug of politicians or bosses who had refused to face up to any wrongdoing, mimicking them with his favourite old-fogey voice and expression, pulling down his chin: "All got up by the press... working perfectly, old boy".

It was more than a gift for mockery: it was part of his wide sense of history and perspective. He knew that it had all happened before, and would happen again. He knew, from his upbringing, how the Establishment works and talks, with all its defences (sometimes his mockery could sound like a parody of his father Lord Caradon, who was a courageous and independent diplomat, but could sound quite pompous). He also knew how persistent campaigners could change history, and that mockery could be a devastating weapon.

But his humour was part of his fortitude. When he was close to death five years ago, unable to walk, he didn't forget to be funny. When he began to recover he gave a thank-you celebration at a pub near his hospital, Homerton, he called it his "Back from the Dead" party. When he could at last move around on crutches he loved the compliment at *Private Eye*: "everything Footy does, stands up". He never sounded self-important or solemn: when he went back to work at *Private Eye*, he explained he was like "a dog returning to his vomit".

Yet all the fun concealed an extraordinary dedication and capacity for hard work. Behind his jokes and casualness he never stopped asking the important questions and taking careful note of the answers. One of his sons recalled at his funeral how he was always losing his keys and spectacles, but never forgot telephone-numbers. I will always remember him scribbling notes, not on a reporters' notebook, but all round a crumpled brown envelope which he pulled out from his pocket. It was disarmingly amateurish, but the answers were there.

The Bohemian atmosphere of the *Private Eye* lunches provided his natural habitat, a relaxed setting where guests would lose their inhibitions, and compete with stories and indiscretions. Yet he never betrayed his sources: when a newspaper editor let out a rash indiscretion about his proprietor at one lunch, he took care to fax him afterwards to make sure that he could use the scoop.

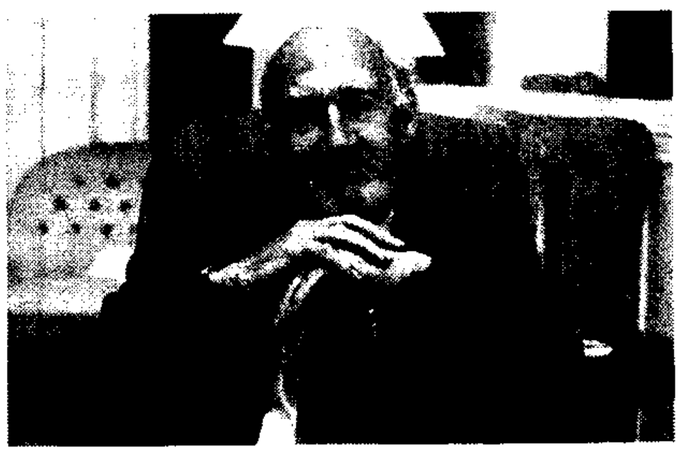
He could work very hard, and his major investigations were quite isolating. When he wrote *Not the Scott Report* which analysed the evidence about British arms sales to Iraq – a more revealing document than the eventual report by Lord Scott – he spent six months on it, he told me, and he was disappointed by its reception. But he still persevered. His inquiry into the Lockerbie disaster – which he argued was not perpetrated by the Libyans – was a feat of detailed analysis which showed he could have been an outstanding lawyer.

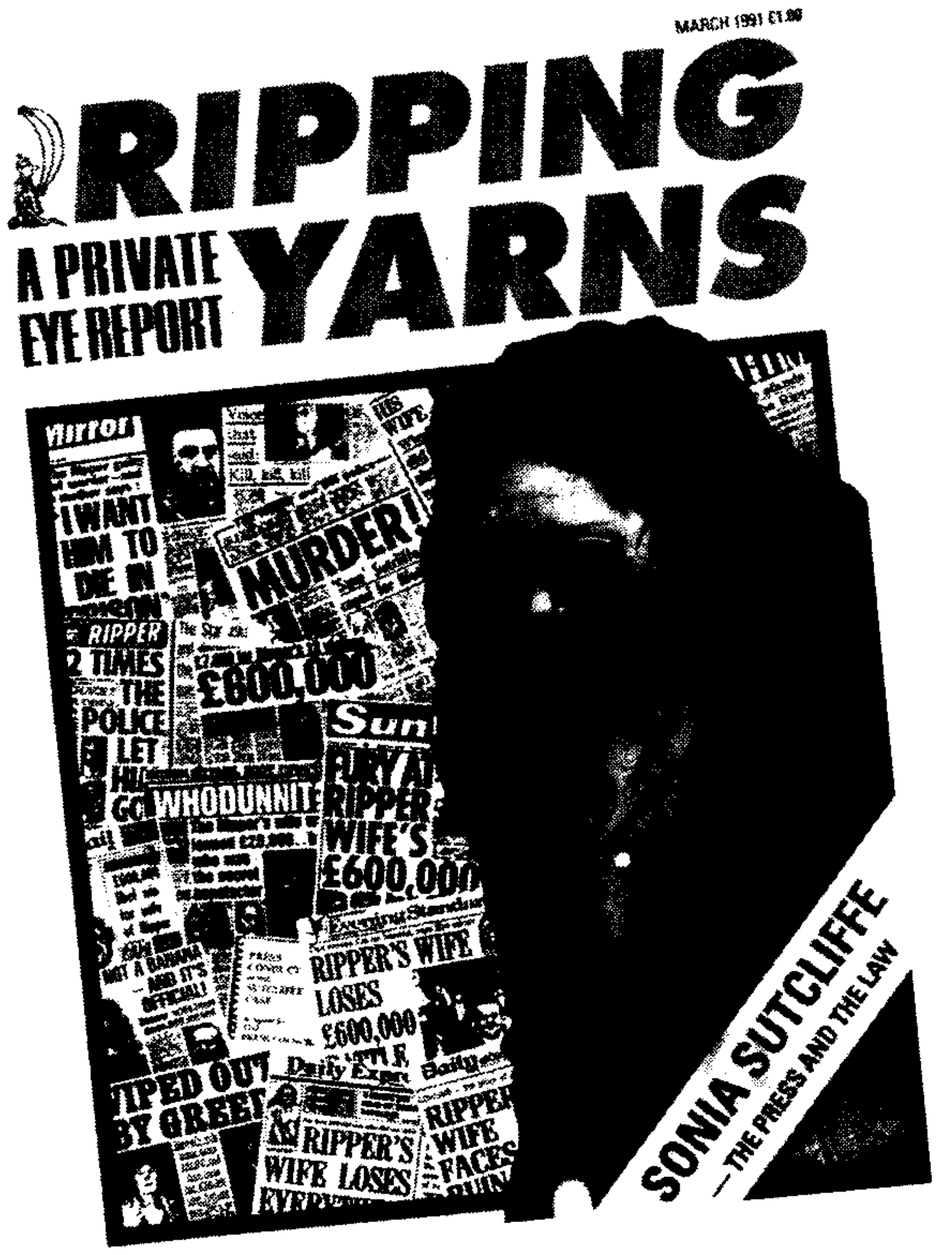
But he needed to plough his own lonely furrow. Despite all the frustrations of his investigations he still believed that the world could be made a better place through the eventual revolution. When I wrote books about the misdeeds of multinational corporations, he criticised me, in the most friendly terms, for not proposing an alternative economic system. Sceptics like myself remained puzzled by his loyalty to the cause of Socialist Workers: at his funeral we could not quite bring ourselves to raise our clenched fists as the congregation sang: "Arise ye starvelings from your slumbers". But it was his Utopia which kept him going, providing his motivation and persistence.

With all his revolutionary zeal he remained a fixed point in a turning world, over forty turbulent years. As political parties swung this way and that, and national newspapers changed proprietors, policies, shapes and sizes, Footy remained the same independent campaigner pursuing his own quest for truth. He brought his own ideas to newspapers – whether the *Daily Mirror* or the *Guardian* – rather than vice-versa. And his real home, *Private Eye*, which looked so ephemeral and home-made, with its shabby newsprint and idiosyncracies, remained as the most consistent national organ, invulnerable to changing political and commercial pressures. With Footy's help, it had become a crucial part of Britain's informal constitution, the court of ultimate appeal against outrageous conduct. As a company chairman once admitted to me: "If a director puts forward some really shady proposition, I have to say: 'What would happen if that got into *Private Eye*?' ".

Footy's unique role depended, in the end, not on any newspaper, but on his personality and breadth of mind and knowledge. It had been forged not so much by Shrewsbury and Oxford as by his experience in the slums of Glasgow, and inspired by Shelley as well as socialism. His family remained all-important, and his love of literature, history and football gave him a perspective which went much wider than politics. It was the combination which made him such a lovable human being whom even his enemies found hard to hate, and which attracted countless friends who will find him irreplaceable."

ANTHONY SAMPSON





except for the *Eye*, by now in new offices in Carlisle Street and with a new editor, Ian Hislop. Paul meanwhile had never lost touch with the *Eye* and had played a notable part, for example, in the battle against Sonia Sutcliffe, wife of the Yorkshire Ripper, who won record libel damages of £600,000 in 1989 for a Street of Shame article attacking chequebook journalism in the wake of the Ripper murder trial.

Mrs Sutcliffe denied having ever attempted to make money from her story, but it was Paul who in his *Mirror* column eventually proved that she had indeed received the sum of £25,000 from the *Mail on Sunday*, paid in a roundabout way to the boyfriend of a reporter, Barbara Jones, who subsequently published a front-page interview with her in the *Mail on Sunday*. Paul's 1991 pamphlet, *Ripping Yarns*, told the full, extraordinary story with his usual narrative skill.

On Saturday April 14 1999 Paul, who had been experiencing dizziness and lapses of memory, was taken to hospital with a suspected heart attack. Whilst in hospital he had a thoracic aortic aneurysm. Complications followed and the doctors warned his family that even were he to recover, it was likely that he would be brain-damaged. Nevertheless, Paul regained consciousness after about five weeks and from then on began to make a slow but steady recovery. By the start of October he was well enough to go home and was even able to walk a few steps, something that doctors had thought would never happen.

Miraculously, his brain was unaffected and even when still in hospital he had been filing copy to the *Eye*. He returned to the office in November and during his last five years did much of his finest work.

"In 2002," Michael Gillard writes, "Paul revealed the incompetence and cover-up by Inland Revenue mandarins and Labour Treasury Ministers of the bargain basement sale of the Revenue and Customs' property portfolio to the offshore tax haven company Mapeley. A one-sided deal which will burden British taxpayers for years to come. His disclosures embarrassed the Revenue and alerted MPs to

"I was very intimidated. It was 1968, I was eighteen and it was my first job working for anybody. I had just arrived in London from school in Scotland. The *Eye* seemed alarmingly full of people who knew everything about everybody. I was a sort of assistant to Paul which largely meant looking things up in the newspapers.

I remember on about my first day Paul leaning back in his chair and asking if I could recall details of some scandal in Cardiff council. He wondered if the main protagonist could be the same man accused of corruption elsewhere in Wales five years previously. I felt that everybody else, apart from me, knew the answer to this question. But overall I found Paul's presumption that I knew what was going on in the world – even if the precise details had momentarily slipped my memory – extremely encouraging.

The only danger of this approach was that I first learned of the existence of well-known public figures through their nickname at the *Eye*. I would still sub-consciously identify them by it even when I discovered their real name. Once I was trying to telephone a senior colonial civil servant called Sir David Hunt, High Commissioner in Nigeria at the start of the civil war. Paul always referred to him by his nickname, probably originating in a misprint in a local paper, so when I finally tracked down the elusive mandarin I immediately referred to him as 'Sir Havid Cunt'."

PATRICK COCKBURN

Gurpal Virdi

Paul first got involved in the case of Sergeant Gurpal Virdi in January 1999, when he learned that the police officer had made a submission to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry detailing a similar case that was being covered up on his own patch of Hanwell. Virdi criticised his senior officers for their handling of the investigation of a racist attack and found himself being accused of sending racist hate mail – despite the fact that he himself had been one of the recipients. The long, drawn-out process was chronicled in the back pages of *Private Eye* over several years, from the dropping of charges against Sergeant Virdi by the CPS to his exoneration by an employment tribunal. When he finally won his case, the first person he called was Paul Foot. When the pair finally met in 2001, it was as if they were old friends.

Paul's coverage of the Virdi story gave *Private Eye* many new readers from within the police service and also from many victims of police injustice and the ethnic minority communities. "He was truly a great journalist," says Virdi, "who led the way where others would not dare."

Paul at his desk at 34 Greek Street.
By Barry Fantoni

the scandal and the attempts to mislead Parliament and the taxpayer."

Nothing was more impressive than the courage and determination with which Paul fought back after his near-fatal illness in 1999. He found it frustrating not to be able to walk without sticks and he was experiencing regular bouts of severe back pain.

He remained, in spite of everything, his old cheerful self, even joking about the fact that he might not live for very much longer.

Family and friends can take comfort from the reflection that the one thing he dreaded was becoming an invalid reliant on others for care. The huge turn-out at his funeral – some 2,000-plus people – bore witness to the support and affection he inspired. For a man who was so controversial, so hard-hitting in his writing, he made very few enemies. In spite of his difficulties, he was hardly ever angry or even bad-tempered.

At *Private Eye* it is fair to say that he was loved and respected by all those involved. He had been so long a part of the scenery that it is hard to adjust to his loss. The sticks at the bottom of the stairs – a sign to all that he was in the building – are no longer there. And we shall never hear again that triumphant cry coming from his office: "We've got him! We've got the bastard!"

Investigative Journalism

Tony Harcup was researching a book on journalism and went to interview Paul. These were some of his quotes:

"It's a complete fraud, the idea that there is a race apart called Investigative Journalists. It leads to hierarchical notions of grand journalists as opposed to less good men."

"I never learned a skill, I never even learned shorthand. I was never very good with a tape recorder. There are certain skills that you learn from experience, but the main point is to be curious and sceptical. You can't be an investigative journalist unless you are both curious and sceptical all the time."

"Whatever you see, there's a story behind it. There isn't a world of investigative journalism that is any different from what the ordinary person can see around them. There's no need to qualify, that's one of the reasons it's so attractive. Anyone who can ask a question is qualified to be a journalist."

"Sanctity attached to Paul Foot as the only left-winger on the staff. He was the moral justification for all our confusion of inharmonious responses to the modern world. We all sought his approval as if he had been a beautiful girl. But he bore the burden lightly. For those who find it hard to understand how anyone can claim to believe in workers' power without being a fool or a rogue, I produce Footie as my first exhibit. He is clever and funny and kind."

***AUBERON WAUGH* ('Will This Do?' *1991*)**

Editor's note. I would like to thank all those who have sent in their memories of Paul. For reasons of space it has been possible to print only a small selection, but further tributes will be available on the *Eye* website: www.private-eye.co.uk

Richard Ingrams and Paul Foot at a party to celebrate Paul's return to the *Eye* in 1993

A life in the Eye

1951 Paul Foot, Christopher Booker, Richard Ingrams and Willie Rushton meet at Shrewsbury School. All four go on to edit the school magazine, the *Salopian.*

1957 Paul and Richard Ingrams edit the undergraduate magazine *Parson's Pleasure* while at University College Oxford.

1961 Joins Glasgow *Daily Record*. The first edition of *Private Eye* is published on 25 October 1961.

1964 Returns to London and starts to make occasional contributions to *Private Eye.*

1965 November – Paul writes in *Private Eye* that **"James Hanratty** was not guilty." Hanratty was hanged three years previously for the A6 murder.

1966 September – reveals development of germ warfare at Porton Down. The magazine is requested by the Home Office not to print anything more on the matter "in the interests of security".

1967 31 March – first **Footnotes** column appears, exposing corruption in the case of a £150m petrochemical complex in the Scottish Highlands, investigating bombings by Welsh Nationalists, and noting how "anti-immigration drivel" in the local press aided candidates from the National Front and Sir Oswald Moseley's Union Movement in the Southall by-election.

July – Footnotes predicts success in future for Reverend **Ian Paisley** in both Ulster and Westminster.

1968 Private Eye's **first libel victory**, over a Footnotes story about a corrupt security firm in the Midlands.

10 May – first mention of Dr Christiaan Barnard's **heart transplants**, pointing out that despite widespread positive coverage, the process was largely untested and unable to save patients' lives.

30 August – Paul's first report on the collapse of **Ronan Point**. He reveals engineers' reports concluding that many similar prefabricated towers are "more likely to fall down than to stay up".

December – *Hearts and Grafts*, a special supplement of Paul's pieces on the **"heart transplant** craze" published.

1969 11 April – Paul reveals that his old housemaster at Shrewsbury, now headmaster of Eton, **Anthony Chenevix Trench**, was an enthusiastic flogger of boys.

1 August – In the first of a series of stories, Paul reveals that deputy leader of the opposition **Reginald Maudling** was a director of an offshore property fund run by fraudster **Jerome Hoffman.**

1970 24 April – Paul reveals that **Reginald Maudling**, now home secretary, also had a number of business connections with the troubled business empire run by property developer **John Poulson** and local politician **T. Dan Smith.**

1971

2 March – "The Balsoff Memorandum" printed in Footnotes. **Nora Beloff** of the *Observer* sues for breach of copyright, and loses.

Who Killed Hanratty? published.

1972 August – **Reginald Maudling** resigns from the cabinet over the Poulson affair.

1972 October – Paul Foot leaves *Private Eye* to work for *Socialist Worker*, which he later edits. Three months later he wins Journalist of the Year award from *What the Papers Say.* He continues to contribute to the magazine on a freelance basis.

1975 **Birmingham Six** and **Guildford Four** imprisoned after bomb attacks. Paul begins to campaign against convictions.

1978 July – reports that **Jeremy Thorpe** will be arrested in the Norman Scott affair. Thorpe issues a writ. He is arrested two weeks later.

1979 Starts weekly investigative column in *Daily Mirror* which he writes for the next fourteen years, while still contributing to *Private Eye.*

June – first report in the *Eye* on the suspicious death of **Helen Smith**, a nurse, in Saudi Arabia.

June – **Jeremy Thorpe** goes on trial for conspiracy to murder. He is found not guilty.

November – **Bridgewater Four** imprisoned for murder of newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater. Paul begins to campaign against their false conviction the following year.

1982 December – inquest into death of **Helen Smith** finally held. Jury rejects verdict of accidental death after hearing details of her injuries.

1983 *The Helen Smith Story* published.

1986

Murder at the Farm: Who Killed Carl Bridgewater? published.

June – accuses MI5 of attempts to discredit Deputy Chief Constable **John Stalker** following his investigations into the RUC's "Shoot to Kill" policy. He is later cleared of misconduct.

September – raises questions about another possible suspect in **Bridgewater Four** case.

1987 April – first report on **Colin Wallace**, who was sacked from MoD after refusing to work on operations aimed at destabilising Harold Wilson's government and subsequently imprisoned for manslaughter.

1988 March – first report on the **Gibraltar killings** of three unarmed IRA members by the SAS.

August – reports that three weeks after the **Piper Alpha** disaster in which 170 people died, the UK Offshore Operators Association was demanding a reduction in the number of rescue boats available to oil platforms.

1989 January – Paul's first report on **Lockerbie**, in which he notes that "the view of many – that Palestinian extremists planted the bomb – may not be too far away from the truth".

February – *Rock Bottom*, a special Private Eye report on the government and press cover-up of the **Gibraltar killings**, published.

September – Paul reveals in the *Daily Mirror* that **Sonia Sutcliffe** was paid £25,000 by the *Mail on Sunday* via an intermediary. This forms an important part of *Private Eye*'s successful appeal against the record £600,000 damages Sutcliffe had been awarded earlier that year.

October – **Guildford Four** released by court of appeal after 15 years in prison.

Second Journalist of the Year award from *What the Papers Say.*

Who Framed Colin Wallace? published.

1990 January – reports on new evidence of innocence of **Birmingham Six** and predicts their imminent release.

1991 March – **Birmingham Six** cleared by Court of Appeal and released from prison after 16 years.

1991 September – reports on flaws in the Department of Transport's report on the **Marchioness** disaster, which imposes no restrictions on the owners of the accident-prone dredger which caused it. Paul notes that the company in question is a major donor to the Conservative party. In a series of reports, Paul reveals that families were presented with the wrong bodies for burial, and that many of the victims had their hands amputated, a fact which the authorities refused to explain satisfactorily. The government refuses a public inquiry.

October – the sleeping pill **Halcion** is banned in UK by the Committee on Safety of Medicines due to "high frequency of psychiatric side-effects." Paul had been reporting on suicides connected with the drug for over a decade.

November – a special report on **Lockerbie** by Paul is sceptical about the US Justice Department's announcement that Libyan intelligence agents were responsible.

1992 May – In the first of many reports on the business activities of **Jonathan Aitken**, minister for defence procurement, Paul points out that he had been a director of an arms dealing company on whose behalf he had negotiated with the Saudi royal family.

July – first notes the harassment of relatives of the **Cardiff Three**, dubiously convicted of the murder of a prostitute four years previously. Their convictions are overturned later that year.

1993 May – Paul Foot leaves *Mirror* after devoting his final (unpublished) column to David Montgomery's purge of staff there and returns to *Private Eye* and Footnotes column.

1994

May – Paul's coverage of the **Scott Inquiry** into arms to Iraq begins. In November *Private Eye* publishes *Not the Scott Report: Thatcher, Major, Saddam and the Merchants of Death*, a special edition co-authored with Tim Laxton, which wins the George Orwell Prize for Journalism.

Paul asks why the evidence of Duwayne Brooks, who was with his friend **Stephen Lawrence** when he was murdered, was ignored by police.

The Court of Appeal clears **Eddie Browning** of the "M50 murder" of Marie Wilks, which Paul has been reporting on for the *Daily Mirror* for a number of years.

December – first report on the **Private Finance Initiative**, which has led to disasters in the social security department and the Channel tunnel rail link.

1995 April — the jury in the inquest into the **Marchioness** disaster return a verdict of unlawful killing.

1996

March – **Jonathan Aitken** turns his "simple sword of truth and trusty shield of British fair play" against *Private Eye* and sues for libel over the latest of Foot's series of articles about him, which accused him of being a serial liar. The magazine's legal costs are eventually paid by the trustees of Aitken's estate after he is declared bankrupt and jailed for perjury.

April – reports that social worker **Alison Taylor** was first ignored, then sacked and smeared by police for making (accurate) allegations of child abuse in North Wales.

July – **Colin Wallace** cleared of manslaughter fifteen years after his conviction.

1997 February – **Bridgewater Four** finally cleared and released after 18 years in prison.

1998 April – Paul picks holes in the prosecution case against two Palestinians jailed for bombing the **Israeli Embassy** in London, and reports on rogue MI5 agent **David Shayler**'s claims that warnings about an imminent terrorist attack were ignored.

May – Paul publishes investigation into **British Biotech**, a collapsing pharmaceutical company whose directors' share dealings were under investigation after the failure of all its clinical trials.

1998 June – reveals connections between the gangster father of one of the **Stephen Lawrence** suspects and a Scotland Yard officer which had been glossed over by the Macpherson Inquiry.

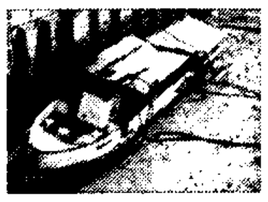
July – reveals that senior MI5 officials believed the bombing of the **Israeli Embassy** to have been carried out by the Israelis themselves to force Britain to provide better security.

1999 January – first story about Sergeant **Gurpal Virdi**, who was arrested and accused of sending racist hate mail after complaining about racism in Metropolitan police. He is later sacked.

February – Paul points out that the **Private Finance Initiative**, now enthusiastically adopted by Labour, is creating new hospitals that are more expensive, with fewer nurses and beds than before.

April – Paul's last piece on **James Hanratty** pointing out that new DNA evidence which linked him to the murders 38 years before may well have been contaminated and unreliable. His murder conviction is later upheld by the Court of Appeal.

April – Paul suffers a thoracic aortic aneurysm.



August – Department of Transport announces judicial inquiry into **Marchioness** disaster.

November – Paul reveals that Norman Duncan, the main prosecution witness in the **M25 murder** case, was a police informer who was paid for his evidence.

2000 February – the Waterhouse Inquiry into child abuse in North Wales concludes that **Alison Taylor**'s allegations, fourteen years earlier were vindicated.

March – receives special *What The Papers Say* Award as campaigning journalist of the decade.

July – the three convicted men in the **M25 murder** case are released by the Court of Appeal.

2001

May – special edition *Lockerbie: The Flight From Justice* published following the conviction of a Libyan intelligence agent for murder.

November – Court of Appeal dismisses appeals of two accused of **Israeli Embassy** bombing after the government applies for Public Interest Immunity certificates to ensure that David Shayler's evidence cannot be considered.

2002 February – reveals that 600 buildings belonging to **Inland Revenue** and Customs have been sold to Mapeley Ltd, a company based in a tax haven.

February – Sergeant **Gurpal Virdi** returns to police force with £240,000 compensation after an employment tribunal rules he was victim of racial discrimination.

September – reports that fourteen years after the **Piper Alpha** disaster, BP is planning to abandon stand-by ships in favour of helicopters, against the recommendations of the Cullen report into the tragedy.

2003 May – *The Artful Dodgers*, a special report on the **Inland Revenue**/Mapeley deal and the government's attempts to cover it up, published.

October – tells the story of Franco and Fatima Bellacosa who were robbed of their £12,000 life savings after Barclays Bank insisted on giving it to them in cash rather than the cheque they had requested. The bank refused to accept any liability. Following publication of the story, *Eye* readers donated the full amount to recompense the Bellacosas.

November – Paul's last piece in *Eye* on death of **Helen Smith.**

2004 March – *P.F.Eye: An Idiot's Guide to the Private Finance Initiative* detailing "how it became a jewel in the crown of New Labour, its savings, its costs, its pitfalls and windfalls, and how it changed the face of British accountancy and British politics" published.

July – Paul Foot dies of a heart attack. He filed his last copy for the *Eye* 24 hours earlier.

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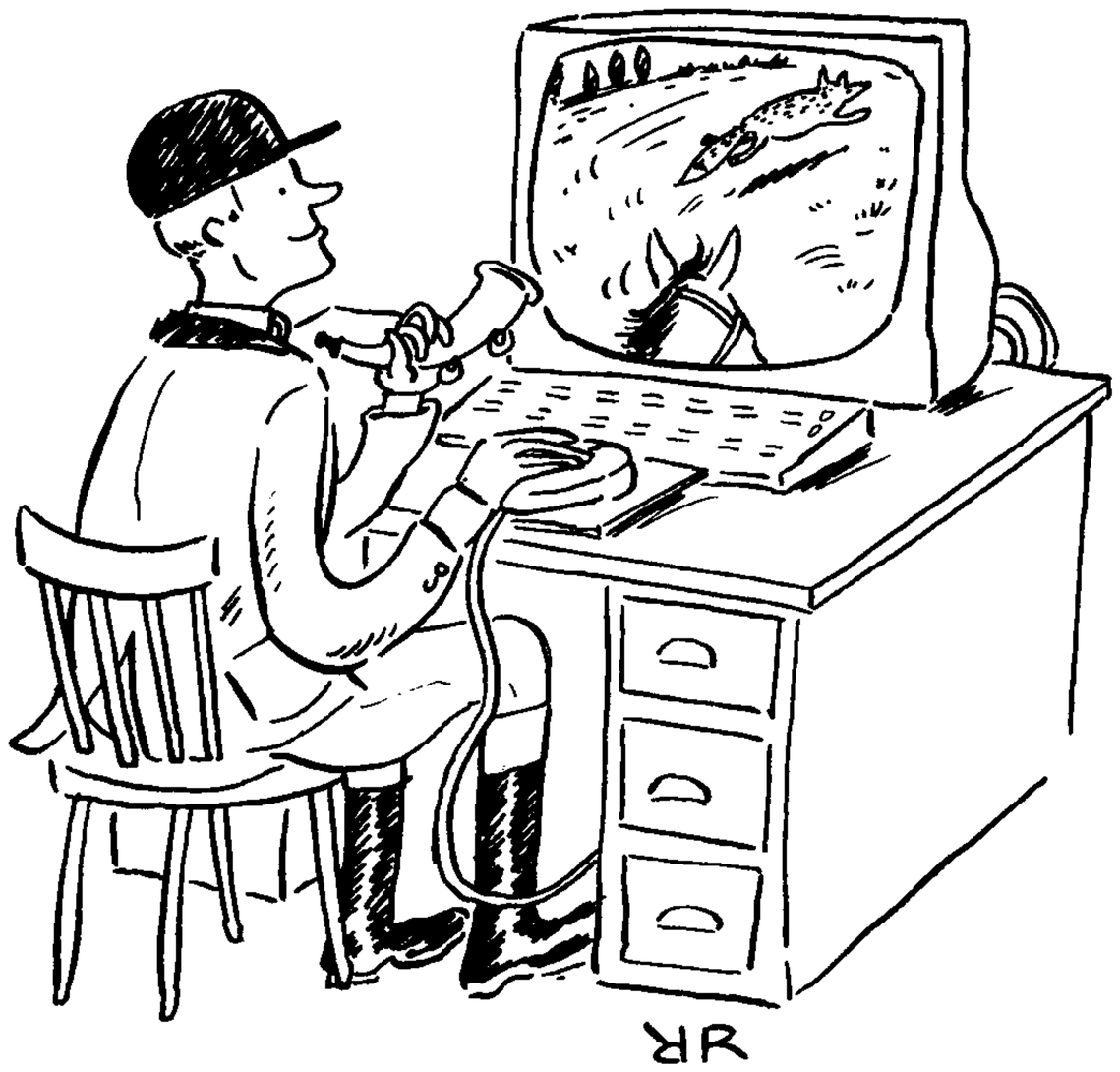
BLAIR OUTRAGED AT COMMONS INVASION

by Our Political Staff **John Sergeant-at-Arms**

THE PRIME Minister yesterday expressed his fury at the invasion of the House of Commons. He told reporters, "The House of Commons is no place for people expressing opinions about Government policy. The House of Commons is meant to be empty so that my policies go through unopposed.

"How dare these hooligans come into the chamber and try and debate the issues? It is an affront to autocracy." *(Surely "Democracy"? Ed.)*



BRIAN CLOUGH DIES

Tributes pour in

by Our Football Staff **E.I.Adieu**

THE WORLD of football was rocked to its foundations last night by the tragic passing of a man they called simply "Brian Clough".

As tributes poured in from all over the world (but mainly Derby), leading former manager, Brian Clough, summed up the feelings of the entire football fraternity.

"Cloughie," he said, "was simply the greatest football manager of all time. There was no one to touch me, and there never will be."

His thoughts were echoed by the legendary Brian Clough, who said, "Just look at my record. All the rest of the managers in history are rubbish. I am and always will be the best."

But perhaps the most touching tribute of all came from the man who knew him best, Brian Clough.

"Brian" he said, "knew more about football management than all the rest put together. If there was a Nobel prize for football, I would have a cupboard full of them."

Clough tributes in full: p. 94-160

A Taxi Driver writes

Every week a well-known cab driver is invited to comment on an issue of topical importance.

THIS WEEK: **'Greg' Dyke**, Cab No. 4650, on the current standing of the prime minister.

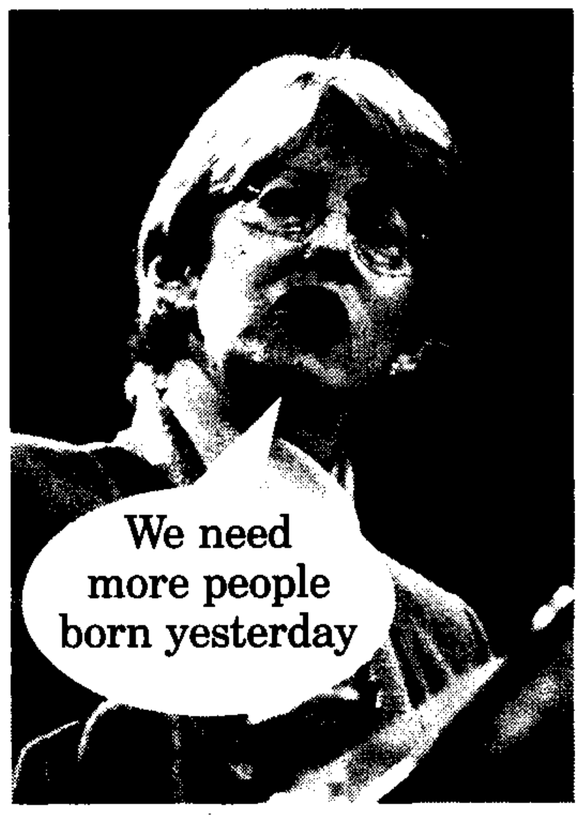
"I don't mind admitting, I used to have a lot of time for Tony. I even gave him some money once, 5,000 quid, which was a lot of money in those days. Course now, it's nuffink, no more than the fare from Hounslow to Shepherds Bush via Norwich. But that Blair, if you ask me, he's blown it. No one would believe a word he says about anything, would they? As for his mate Campbell, what a bastard! All them lies they told us about the war and everything. Bleedin' tosser, Blair, innee? I tell you what, I really hate him! You know what I'd do to him if I had my way? I'd string him up off that London Eye, going round and round with a noose round his neck! What a bastard? Where was it, you said you were going, guv? Sorry, we're going the other way. I had those BBC governors in the back of the cab once. What a load of wankers. Stuck up gits. Dame Pauline Neville-Jones! What's she ever done? Blimey. I think I'm going to have a cardiac arrest. I'll have to pull in to take my tablets. I'd take a bus if I were you, guv. I think I've had enough for one night.

© Sir Gregorian Dyke, former Director General of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

the PREMIERSH*TS

PAUL WOOLEY
PREMIERSHIP PLAYERS CELEBRATE THE MEMORY OF BRIAN CLOUGH...
CLUB
THANK FUCK THERE'S NO MANAGERS LIKE HIM ANYMORE
IF HE'D TOLD ME WHAT TO DO I'D HAVE CHINNED HIM!
WHAT A WANKER THINKING HE WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PLAYERS
WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU ON ABOUT?
HEY, BUT LADS, CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE, THE FUCKER COULD DRINK!

GOVERNMENT DEMANDS BABIES



The Daily Torygraph

THE PAPER THAT SUPPORTS OUR BORIS

Friday, October 1, 2004

Pathetic Lib Dems Top Poll

BY OUR POLITICAL STAFF FRANK JOHNSON AND DANIEL JOHNSON

NO-HOPER Charles Kennedy is all set to lead his bunch of losers to their best ever election result, according to a poll commissioned by this paper from notyou.gov.

The drunken and universally-derided Lib Dem leader scores the highest personal popularity rating of all the party leaders, gaining a dismal 86 percent approval, compared to Michael Howard's fast-rising 2 percent figure.

When voters were asked, "Which party do you trust most on the issue of pensions?", it was the sandal-wearing, cardigan-eating, vegetarian, lesbian non-smokers who came out on top, with a miserable 94 percent.

All this adds up to a week of woe for 'Chat-show Charlie', as the Lib Dems are so demoralised that they cannot even mount a proper leadership challenge.

2004

by George Orwell

IT was a bright, cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

As he entered the Ministry of Truth building, the words of the great leader continued to echo in Winston's ears... *"The war with Iraq is over, The war with Iraq has just begun"* (cont. p. 94)

"Defusing car bomb... 85 quid plus VAT?!"

Daily Mail

'I'VE GIVEN UP LOOZING' Claims Kennedy

by Our Drinks Staff PHIL GLASS

THE LEADER of the Liberal Democrats, Mr Charles Kennedy, has told delegates that he is now officially "off the looze" and that from now on there would be "no more loozing" for him.

First Pissed The Post

"In the past," he told stunned party members, "I've been a bit of a loozer and this has affected the health of the party."

First Past The Pissed

"But things have changed," he continued. "After a serious talking to by the spin doctors, I'm on the bandwagon, and the days of me looking ill because I've had too many defeats are over.

"From now on, it's the other leaders who will be sweating," he concluded, "as their support collapses and they slump to the floor."

Meanwhile, observers were impressed by the new-look Kennedy.

The Future Is Orange Juice

"He's put on a lot of weight, his vision is a lot clearer and his speeches make more sense *(cont. p. 94)*

The Woman in White the Complete Libretto
EXIT
DID YOU COME BY TRAIN?
YES, IT WAS A PAIN
IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE? THE MAN SITTING HERE HAS NO PULSE
THE SETS THE STAR, THERE IS NO DOUBT..
IT'S A PITY YOU CAN'T HUM IT WHEN YOU GO OUT!
IT IS TRAGIC THERE IS NO MAGIC
AS IT'S BY LLOYD WEBBER, IT WILL PROBABLY RUN FOR EVER
HEATH
WAS THAT YOU SNORING?
YES, I FIND IT BORING
WILL IT NEVER END? IT'S SENDING ME AROUND THE BEND!

WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE BOOK PUBLISHED

No Copies Sold

by Our Literary Staff
Professor Rowan Pelling,
Chair of Erotic Studies at the University of Filth *(formerly the Raymond Revuebar Polytechnic)*

THE WORLD's longest-ever book has been published today, costing £4 million. The new 'Dictionary of Everyone Who's Ever Lived' contains 2 billion entries, has taken 25 years to compile and contains more words than there are grains of sand in the Sahara.

All Must-Have Entries

For the first time, the Oxford DEWEL (formerly the DNB) includes the names of the entire dead population of the British Isles, up to the year 2000.

Professor Brian Greyman, who masterminded the biggest single project since the Pyramids, said last night, "our new all-inclusive policy means that, for the first time, women, the disabled and members of the ethnic communities are at last properly represented, not to mention all those obscure, ordinary people who may not have done anything worth remembering but who have a perfect right not to be excluded from such a vital research tool".

Here are just some of the millions of new entries whose details have been included in the greatest book ever published.

Ethelreda the Unwilling *(806?-817?)* Ethelreda was the second daughter of Ethelred the Ever Ready and his wife Ribena. Nothing is known of her life or indeed that of her parents, but it has been suggested that she may have lived near the East Anglian settlement of Hutton Hoo.

Warren Onanugu *(1962-1999)* Earned his place in history as the Nigerian-born, Paddington-based wineshop manager who once sold a plastic bag of clinking bottles to a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont.

Captain James Hook *(apocryphal)* Possibly the best-known disabled Old Etonian of his generation. Served as self-appointed Governor of the Neverneverland Islands, and was notorious for the brutality with which he suppressed the so-called "Lost Boys Revolt", led by the charismatic human rights campaigner Wendy Darling and her male assistant Peter Pan.

The longest entry in the book is for the late Diana, Princess of Wales, taking up an entire volume.

"We are particularly proud of this entry," said Professor Greyman, "because it might get us some publicity, and she is the only person that the public has ever heard of."

The 'Dictionary of Everyone Who's Ever Lived' is available at www.mostexpensivebookintheworld.com for only £7,500 a month.

WHO ELSE IS IN

Fanny Hill
White Van Man
Monty Python
Cyril the Squirrel
(cont. p. 9,999,994)

POLLY FILLER

HOW dare Patricia Hewitt tell us all we've got to have more babies? The women of this country are *already* looking after enough babies, ie their useless menfolk!

Who needs another selfish, incompetent dependent when you've already got one called Simon sitting slumped in front of "Grumpy Old Men" starring A.A. Gill and Rick Wakeman, nodding his head as though any of them told us something we didn't know, like, for instance, how useless men are?

I'LL tell you what annoys *me* about modern life – it's people who don't empty the dishwasher and don't turn up to Charlie's parents' evening at St Tweedles School for Dispraxic Over-Achievers because there's a repeat of Jeremy Clarkson's Extreme Tank Racing from Qatar on the Testosterone Channel! That's what gets *my* goat!

So don't talk to me about babies, Ms Hewitt. What you're proposing is the Nanny State – and Polly Filler for one is having none of it.

Nannies are too expensive, especially when you can get an au pair from Haiti for less than £1 an hour!! And Delphine *does* know where the dishwasher is and is grateful that it's not blowing around the house!!

Who loves ya, baby? Not Polly Filler!

© *Polly Filler in all newspapers.*

A COLOURFUL clergymen has deserted his flock and family for a mother-of-four he fell for from the pulpit. *Daily Express*

Daily Mail

What's Wrong With Flu?

Asks The World's Worst Columnist MAX HASTINGS

I'VE got the flu. But you won't catch me grizzling and moaning like some people.

There's nothing I like better than to be tucked up in bed with a temperature of 104 degrees, a hacking cough, a raging headache and feeling like death warmed up.

It's a wonderful autumn tradition. Which is why I say to all those whingers who complain that they've got the dreaded lurgy, "Rejoice. There's nothing to beat a healthy dose of good, old-fashioned, British flu."

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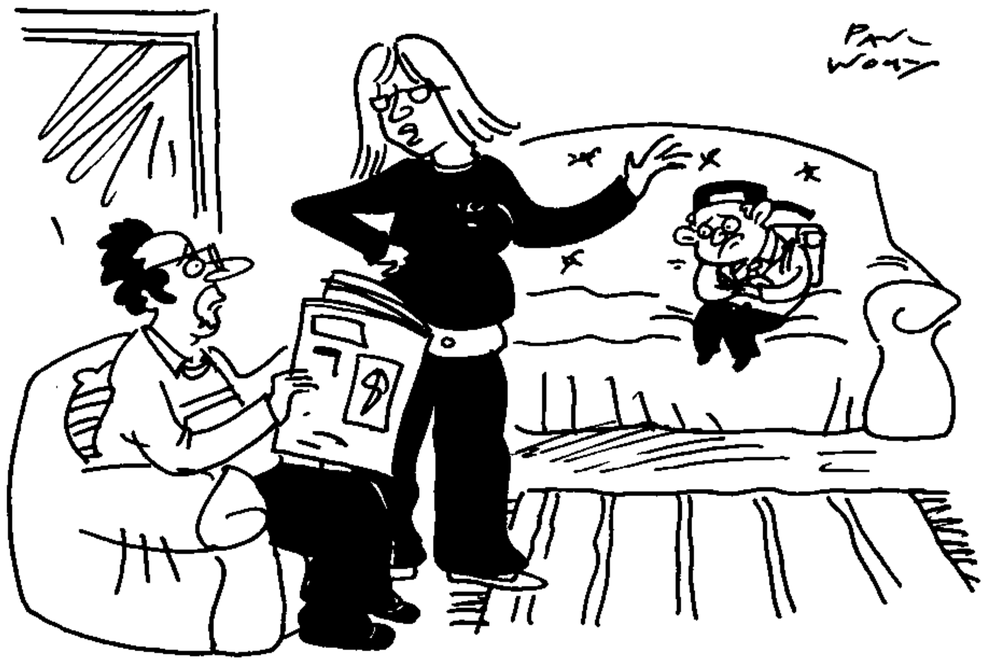


"He's being bullied at school because he doesn't suffer from an allergy"

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
Françoise Sagan

So. Farewell
Then.
Françoise Sagan.
Famous author
of Bonjour
Tristesse.

How ironic
That seems
Today now
That you have
Passed on.

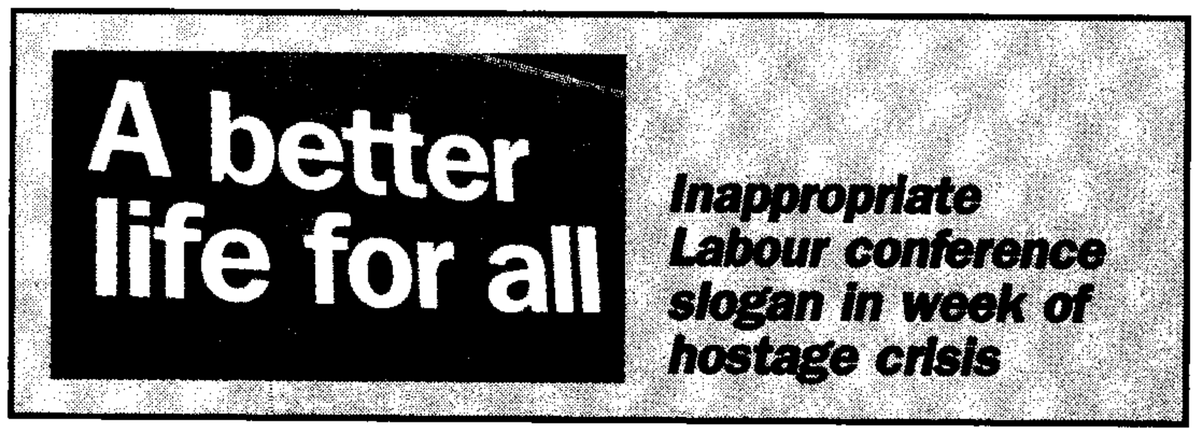
E.J. Thribb (17½)

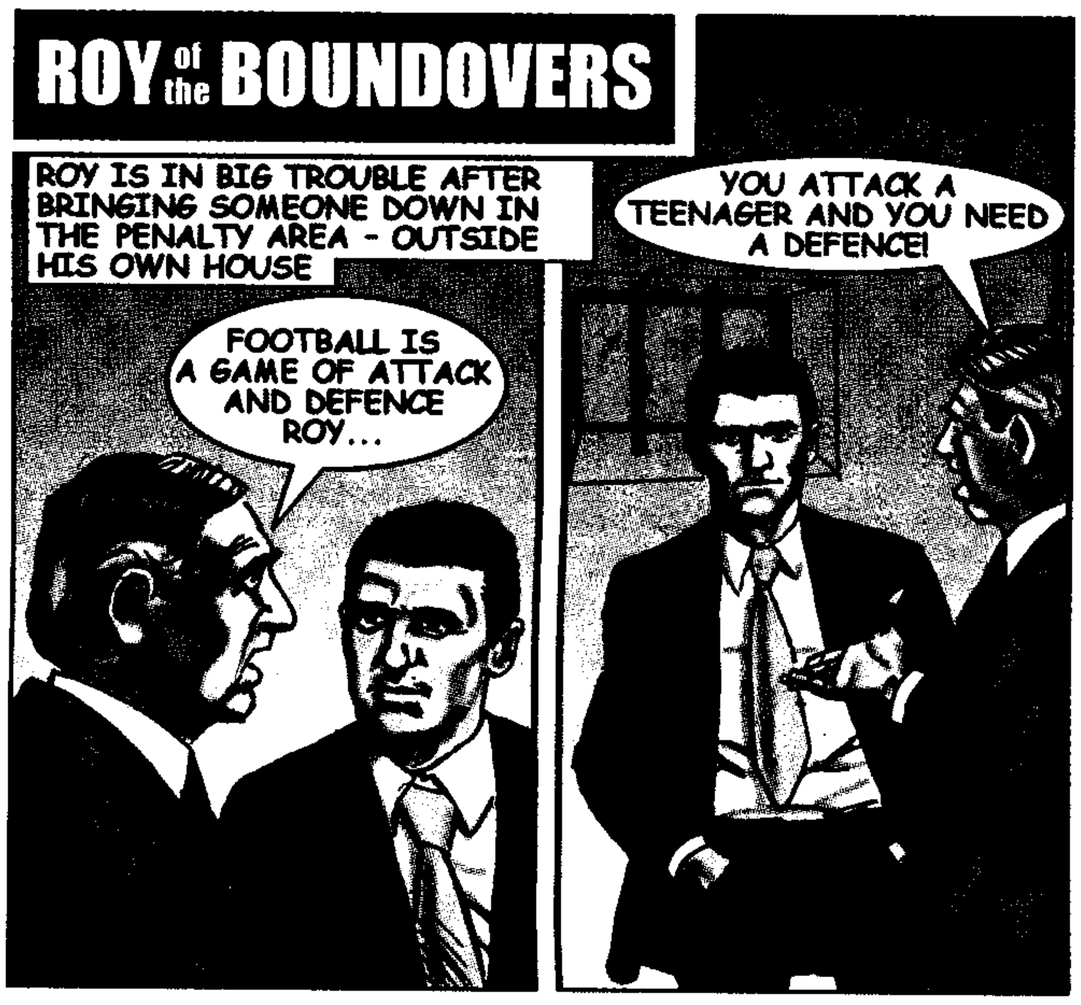
EXCLUSIVE TO EVERY PAPER

Researchers Find That Teenagers Ignore Anti-Smoking Campaigns

ON OTHER PAGES

■ Researchers discover that bears ignore warning signs about not defecating in woods ■ Researchers discover that Catholic Bishops ignore calls to elect non-Catholic Pope




ROY of the BOUNDOVERS
ROY IS IN BIG TROUBLE AFTER BRINGING SOMEONE DOWN IN THE PENALTY AREA - OUTSIDE HIS OWN HOUSE
FOOTBALL IS A GAME OF ATTACK AND DEFENCE ROY...
YOU ATTACK A TEENAGER AND YOU NEED A DEFENCE!

Late News

LABOUR REVEAL CONFERENCE GUEST SPEAKER

THE Labour Party have revealed that their guest speaker at this year's annual party conference will be the globe-trotting luminary, Tony Blair.

A Labour spokesman said: "Tono is an incredibly busy man, jetting off around the world and attending high-powered meetings with the likes of President Bush, which is why we're delighted that the great man has managed to squeeze us into his busy schedule."

HOWARD 'IMMIGRATION' PLEDGE

CONSERVATIVE Leader Michael Howard today pledged to halt the worrying number of Tory voters migrating to the Lib Dems and UKIP.

"I propose a quota of half-baked populist announcements to get me on the front page of the Daily Telegraph," a delighted Mr Howard told reporters. "We believe that these articles will put a stop to the flood of middle-class voters into these other parties."

However, many observers say that the chances of the Tories actually halting this flood of people seeking to escape the horror of election defeats for what they hope will be a better life in another party are next to nil.

INHERITANCE NEWS

MICHAEL Howard has admitted that the inheritance burden being inflicted on decent ordinary Tory leaders was intolerable.

"The party actually expects people like Hague, Duncan Smith and me to win elections – that's the terrible inheritance of Mrs Thatcher," said a horrified Conservative leader *(cont'd p. 94)*

IRAQ ELECTION

IYAD ALLAWI, the Prime Minister of Iraq, has told a joint session of the US Congress that the security situation in Iraq is improving, and has insisted that a free and fair democratic election to be held in just a few months' time will decide who rules the country.

"I'm fascinated to see whether it'll be George Bush or John Kerry," said Allawi *(cont'd p. 94)*

DIARY

I Remember, I Remember

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Would have sodomised him up the fucking arse.

O No John!

On yonder hill there stands a creature
So who the fuck are you, chum?

If

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs to the American
fucking bastards
Who couldn't give a fucketty shit whether
Your fucking head stays on your neck
or bloody not;
If you can talk with crowds and keep
your virtue
Or walk with Kings – and tell them to shut the
fuck up.
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you
Because they've just blown the fucking
bollocks off you
Yours is the Earth and all the fucking piss
that's in it,
And – which is more – you can eat shit, my son!

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree
And a small cabin build there, of clay and
wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the
honey-bee,
Until the Yanks come along and fuck the shit
out of it.

Home Thoughts from Abroad

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That stinky fucker Mr Tony fucking Blair,
And says, Look, chum, get off my fucking land
You're trespassing so wipe that fucking smile
Off your fucking face and fuck the fuck off.

HAROLD PINTER'S
REVISED BOOK OF
ENGLISH VERSE

Horatius

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Shouldn't get its nose ground
In the shit any fucking more.

We'll Go No More A-Roving

We'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Certainly not if the Blair fascists
Have their fucking way
And gag myself and Lady Antonia
And leave us head-first in a fucking gutter
Somewhere South of Holland Park.

Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils.
And I said, come on, Lady Antonia,
Get your coat on, I'm not standing
For any more of this fucking nonsense
Those fucking daffodils have got it in for us
It's free speech they can't abide.

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea
And the ploughman homeward plods his
weary way
Until the bomb goes off, his head is smashed
to blazes
And his hand is blown to fucking smithereens
And his ploughman's lunch ends up in a
fucking puddle, all wet and soggy.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
On the direct orders of Mein Fuhrer Blair:
Thanks a fucking bunch, chum.

Cargoes

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.
They blew them into fucking shit.
They are eating it.
Now I want you to come over here and kiss me
on the arse, chum.

The Owl and the Pussy Cat

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat.
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Because they were fucking Yanks
Sucking the shit out of the arse of the poor.

Come into the Garden, Maud

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, Night, has flown:
Come into the garden, Maud,
For I am here at the gate alone,
Sniffing the pong of the dead.

The Tiger

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
The big pricks are out.
They'll fuck everything.
Watch your back.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

GARY YOU'VE HAD A LONG AND ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER AS A ROCK STAR AND HELL RAISER...
YOU'VE RELEASED COUNTLESS HIT ALBUMS DESPITE MANY WELL-PUBLICISED BATTLES WITH YOUR DEMONS...
THAT'S RIGHT, MICHAEL...
SO WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS YOUR FINEST HOUR...?
ABOUT THREE IN THE MORNING. THAT'S WHEN I'M GENERALLY AT MY BEST...

Literary Review

Autumn Fiction

TWENTY years ago the late-September release of the Booker shortlist would have been a sure-fire excuse for a rash of learned articles about "the state of fiction". Where was the English novel going, half-a-dozen pundits would zealously have inquired. And who was jostling for space on the thronged upper deck?

Two decades later such articles no longer appear. For there are practically no centralising tendencies in modern British fiction; simply a great mass of novels spilling out each autumn on to the bookshop shelves with nothing to connect them other than the fact that some fond author, agent and publisher thought them worth putting into print. All that can be said of this year's shortlist, consequently, is that it represents what five intelligent people, set upon the ludicrous task of reading a book a day for four months, imagine will do.

As for the results of this trawl through the massed packing cases of this year's submissions, all the usual complaints routinely levelled at this fine old institution apply. Obscure personal preferences take their customary bow (what, other than the fact than its author is acquainted with two members of the panel, could have seen Matt Thorne waved on to the longlist at the expense of the Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul?) closely followed by a craven reluctance to stray from a path mapped out by the critics of six months before.

Each of this year's front-runners – David Mitchell's ambitious but overlong *Cloud Atlas*, Allan Hollinghurst's preening gay style guide to the 80s, *The Line of Beauty*, and Colm Toibin's Henry James tribute *The Master* – have already been piped clamorously into the airport terminal, leaving Chris Smith and his sidekicks with the less glamorous job of stamping their passports.

But there is another reason for the curious arbitrariness of this and other recent Booker shortlists, the dispiriting thought that *any* of the 130 or so novels that get sent in would somehow do. This, inevitably enough, is the feebleness of the wider landscape.

Most literary history, seen in the round, shows how fatal it is to hanker after the idea of a golden age; yet two decades back, in the era of *Midnight's Children*, *Waterland*, *Money* and *Hawksmoor*, it was possible to believe that here we were swaggering through the well-tended streets of a fictional boom-town. What happened to all those golden boys?

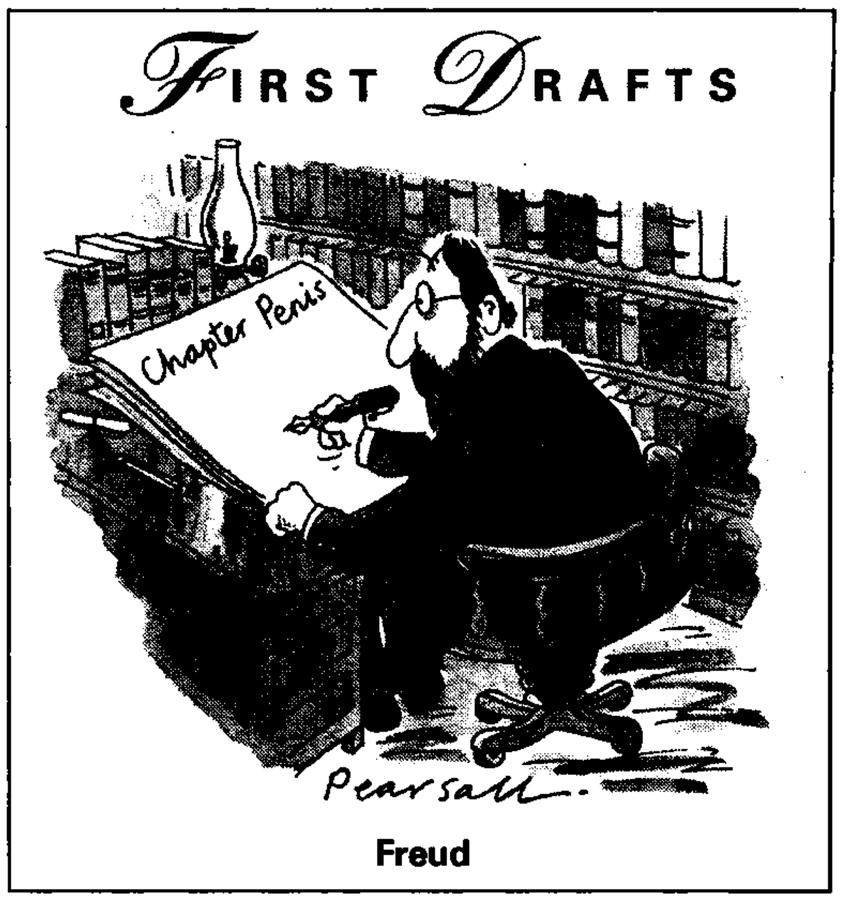
Well, Mart started parodying himself; Swifty's current work-rate is a book every seven years; Julian Barnes's fiftysomething forte is melancholic and oh-so neatly schematised short stories; while Timothy Mo drifted off into the reed beds of self-publishing.

In their place, and to set against a kind of writing that was broadly homogenous in tone (sharp, metropolitan, eclectic) labours a kaleidoscopic assembly of contending styles and approaches. There are the quirky highbrow talents still trying bravely to stick to the commercial template (Jonathan Coe's *The Closed Circle*) and the immensely fashionable novelty-historical acts, this year's model being Susanna Clarke's deliriously hyped 19th century magical epic *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*. Old-style picturebook lyricism (William Riviere's *By The Grand Canal*) just about hangs on.

There are the gnarled veterans looking to extend their range and, in the case of David Lodge's *Author! Author!* (another Henry James tribute but six months behind Toibin on the schedules) rather missing the boat, trailed by state-we're-in merchants such as Justin Cartwright (*The Promise of Happiness*) whose creative talents are occasionally shouldered aside by straightforward reportage.

Hang on though, the cry goes up, what about the young people? What are they up to? Sad to relate, the young people – by which I mean anyone under 40 – are displaying that most regrettable of young person's creative tendencies: the ability to write without producing anything categorisable as a narrative. A.L. Kennedy's *Paradise*, for instance, a searing and feistily conducted anatomy of alcoholism, works very well as a study of a consciousness but much less so as a novel. *Clear*, Nicola Barker's hastily written (one suspects) account of last autumn's David Blaine extravaganza, trundles even further down this route, assembling a fine old collection of stylistic tics and lots of vocalised *italics* masquerading as realistic dialogue. Matt Thorne's *Cherry*, on the other hand – dull man meets hard-core dream-girl with unpleasant results – just gives up the pursuit in a baffling final chapter which implies that the whole thing was simply make-believe. Or something.

Even the lavishly framed *Cloud Atlas* – a shoo-in for this year's prize – is conspicuously short of anything resembling a narrative line or, like much on offer here, the hint of a much-needed editorial pencil. Oh dear, oh dear. And yet, before one starts waxing all nostalgic about the gleaming early 80s, when Mart, Jules and Ackers and were in their pomp, it's as well to remember that the 1984 Booker Prize was won by, er, Anita Brookner's *Hotel du Lac*.



Freud

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ *SUNDAY Telegraph* deputy editor Matthew d'Ancona was generous with his praise for Boris Johnson's debut novel *Seventy-Two Virgins* last weekend, describing it as "a splendidly accomplished and gripping first novel" which he "highly recommended."

The novel deals with an attack by Arab terrorists in London – as does *Going East*, last year's debut novel by *Sunday Telegraph* deputy editor Matthew D'Ancona, which the *Spectator* (edited by one Boris Johnson) described as "impressive", noting that "like the first-class journalist that he is, d'Ancona is always vivid and fluent."

Indeed, d'Ancona has demonstrated these qualities many times in the pages of the *Spectator*, for which he writes regularly – as does William Leith, who reviewed Johnson's book in the *Daily Telegraph*, promising that "you'll smile, you'll ponder, and you'll flit through these pages in an afternoon." Having obliged elsewhere, neither chap was available to do the honours in Johnson's own pages, so the job of writing the *Spectator*'s review of *Seventy-Two Virgins* fell to ex-cabinet minister and novelist Douglas Hurd, the man whom Johnson has publicly credited for inspiring him to go into politics and who was last seen defending his disastrous policy of non-intervention in the Balkans at length and unopposed in the pages of, er, the *Spectator*.

Hurd's conclusion? "This is a laurel from a new bush, but certainly a prizewinner."

■ NO ONE likes to be told their new book is "one long cringe" and "silly to the point of farce", but you might think that earning millions of dollars from vampire-obsessed fans might cushion the blow of criticism for author Anne Rice. Not so.

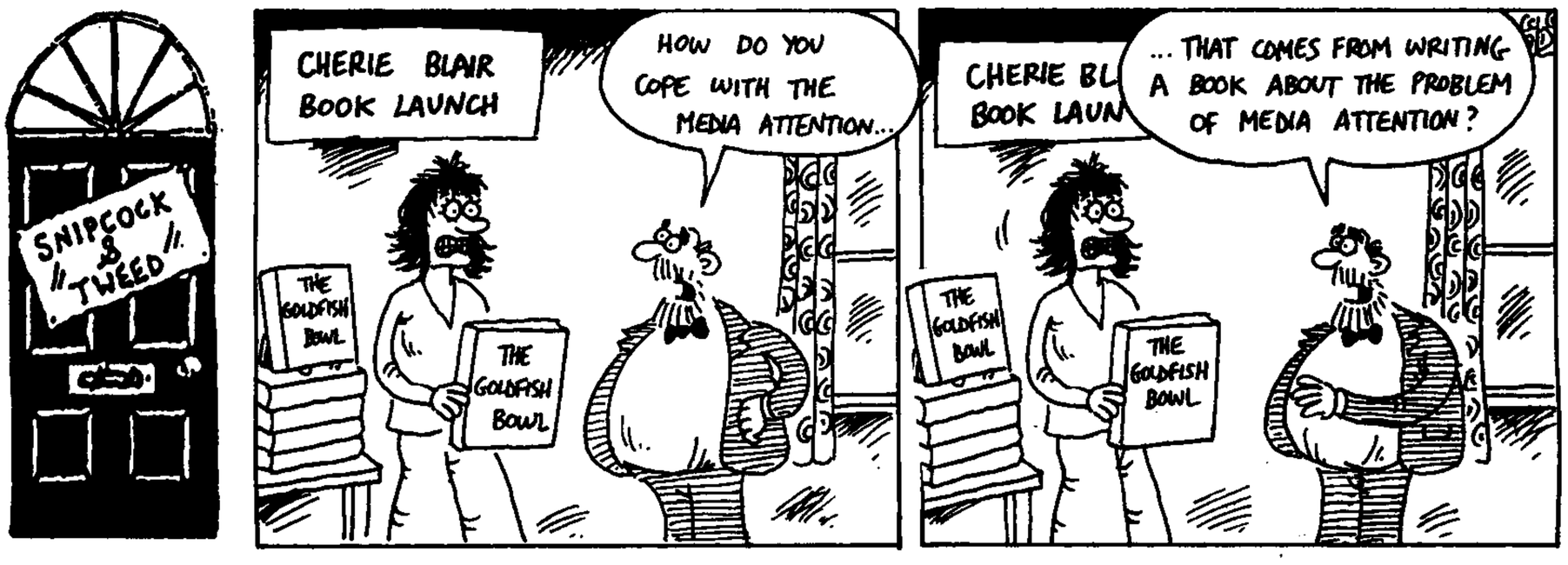
The writer has posted a furious response to the "reader reviews" of her latest blockbuster at internet bookshop Amazon. "You are interrogating this text from the wrong perspective," she informs the amateur critics in a 1,200-word rant without a single paragraph break. "Indeed, you aren't even reading it. You are projecting your own limitations on it."

LIBRARY NEWS

■ BEEN robbed? Then see a librarian. Incredible as it may seem, in Norfolk hard-pressed Inspector Knacker has hit on an ingenious way to fob off police work on others: he's getting local librarians to take down crime reports.

Gorleston library is the first to try the experiment, under which staff will be trained to take reports of crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as handling lost property inquiries, firearms licence applications and receiving driving licences for penalty points.

Enthusiastic council officers say the project will enable libraries to provide a "holistic service". Whether staff have any time to renew library books remains to be seen.


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
CHERIE BLAIR BOOK LAUNCH
HOW DO YOU COPE WITH THE MEDIA ATTENTION...
THE GOLDFISH BOWL
THE GOLDFISH BOWL
CHERIE BL BOOK LAUN
... THAT COMES FROM WRITING A BOOK ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF MEDIA ATTENTION?
THE GOLDFISH BOWL
THE GOLDFISH BOWL

IN THE BACK

SUPERMARKETS

Tesco takes the biscuit

TESCO reported record half-year profits of £822m last week, and chief executive Terry Leahy (pictured right) – a dour former shelf-stacker – got the usual plaudits from the City moneymen. Leahy puts his success down to giving the public what it wants; and in recent weeks has invested millions of pounds of shareholders' money in an advertising campaign which purports to show that Tesco offers consistently low prices – "every little helps", as the jingle says. The facts, however, seem to suggest quite the opposite.

Two weeks ago the *Sunday Times* business section led on a story showing that Tesco had *raised* its prices on hundreds of items while at the same time claiming in its ad campaign that it was slashing prices by more than £30m. This is a confidence trick that the store has used to brilliant effect over the years.

The price-cuts on low-volume items – 2p off L'Oreal ginger hair colouring, for instance – are paid for by hikes on best-selling staples. Although a Tesco spokesman insisted that some of the price rises were on "seasonal products", the *Sunday Times* pointed out that this hardly applies to Heinz baked beans (up from 69p to 78p for a four-pack) or McVities' chocolate digestives (up 6p) or indeed boxes of Tetley tea-bags (up 8p).

Needless to say Tesco was furious at the coverage. But the story was not new. It followed a *Spectator* article earlier this summer in which former City hack Dominic Prince did a price comparison between shopping locally at a fruit and veg market and a farmers' shop and at a local Tesco. He found that Tesco charged an astonishing 40 percent more for the equivalent goods. "We are all being done," he concluded. "We are being misled, brainwashed, cheated and we don't even know it is happening. The trick has yet to be exposed, but there is nevertheless a very clever marketing trick being perpetrated and we are all the victims of the rip-off."

Surprisingly Tesco did not react to this assault. A spokesman claimed that he hadn't even seen the piece. But that was certainly not the case several weeks later when Prince wrote a similar article for the London *Evening Standard*. A Tesco solicitor, Dr Deborah Prince (no relation), wrote to the *Standard* demanding copies of receipts and verification of the purchases made. She warned that "in the absence of a satisfactory response" the store would sue.

The *Standard* was having none of it (not least because Prince had indeed kept all the receipts, which proved beyond doubt that Tesco was overcharging) and sent the retailing Goliath a swift rebuff in the style of Arkell vs. Pressdram. Tesco immediately instructed the Mayfair solicitors M Law to sue for libel. On 6 August the firm sent off a fiery missive to the *Standard* claiming that "your allegations about price amount to a very serious libel of our client". For the appalling slur on Tesco's "honesty and business ethics", the company was entitled "to seek very substantial damages".

The *Standard* sent another letter telling Tesco to bugger off, offering again to do the cost comparison with Terry Leahy present. It also wondered why the company was not threatening to sue the *Spectator*. Since then the *Standard* has heard nothing, the *Spectator* has heard nothing and the *Sunday Times* has heard nothing, even though all three papers have stated unequivocally that Tesco is ripping off its customers.

Tesco has wrought revenge on the *Sunday Times* by refusing to let the business section interview Leahy, instead offering the great man to the rival *Sunday Telegraph* instead. It will be interesting to see how much of the lucrative Tesco advertising ends up in the pages of the *Sunday Times* in future.

Meanwhile, there have been several complaints to the advertising standards authority (ASA) about the misleading nature of Tesco adverts, particularly one that appeared – ironically enough – in the *Sunday Times*. The ad boldy stated that "for eleven years now we've been adding more and more products [to the Value range] in a concerted effort to help our customers spend less."

But the ASA decided that "readers are likely to understand that the claim is a reference to their 'Value' product only and not a definitive comparative claim." This is doubly absurd since Tesco does indeed make "definitive comparative claims" and has itself complained to the ASA and Ofcom over an advert from Asda claiming that *it* is the cheapest supermarket.

Having drawn attention to its pricing policy, Tesco must now either put up and risk getting into a McLibel situation, or shut up and effectively admit that it does indeed charge too much. How else do you make an £822m profit in six months?

ACCOUNTANCY

Black day at KPMG

NO SOONER had trade secretary Patricia Hewitt rejected the big four accountancy firms' pleas to limit their liabilities for giving dodgy audits, than Mike Rake, chairman of KPMG International and self-styled champion of responsible accountancy, gave an interview to the *Financial Times* in which he reassured readers of his firm's trustworthiness.

"Our overall objective," he declared sincerely, "is to provide audit, tax and advisory services to the highest level of integrity, quality and consistency that we can."

Rake was less forthcoming, however, on the equally hot issue of KPMG's role in the scandal engulfing one of its major clients, Hollinger International. He refused to answer the *FT*'s questions on the affair, which the week before had been the subject of a scathing report by former chief US financial regulator, Richard Breedon.

Among a litany of charges amounting to "corporate kleptocracy", Breedon's 500-page report detailed how large slices of the $400m "management fees" were paid by Hollinger to chief executive Conrad Black, his wife Barbara Amiel and three other directors. The money was channelled through Black's Ravelston companies and two other outfits registered in Barbados, one called Moffat (Lord Black's middle name), the other Black-Amiel. The idea was that the tax haven companies would pay tax at only 2.5 percent of their income, while tax relief for the payments to them would be available to Hollinger at up to 40 percent.

To maximise the payments to Black and co, and the tax benefit to Hollinger, KPMG was commissioned to produce a report showing that the management fees were at market rates, a requirement for tax relief. Unfortunately for the KPMG tax-planners, they could find no "market" for the kind of management allegedly provided by Black's private companies. So the creative minds at KPMG came up with the spurious notion that the management companies were like venture capitalists, who also charge exorbitant amounts. Black and friends used this finding to claim "independent approval" for the vast handouts.

Under scrutiny from Breedon, however, the KPMG tax specialist who did the study admitted that, on a normal reading of the tax rules, the payments were "substantially" excessive. KPMG sadly neglected to give this view to the Hollinger audit committee, with the result that the company continued to pay the excessive fees and claim inflated US tax relief under the nose of the Internal Revenue Service.

Tax inspectors on this side of the Atlantic, meanwhile, appear to have been a bit more on the ball. The report reveals that the Inland Revenue had for years been denying tax relief for the management fees paid by British Hollinger companies such as the Telegraph. Tax officials will also no doubt be checking whether the extensive range of benefits enjoyed by the couple at the expense of other shareholders, from jogging suits to the use of Gulfstream jets, appeared on Lord and Lady Black's tax returns.

The Revenue authorities aren't the only ones who will be carefully studying Breedon's exposé. Accountancy regulators are likely to question why KPMG, as auditor, stood by as Hollinger haemorrhaged funds into Black's pockets, at the expense of shareholders and taxpayers in Britain and America. Could it, they may wonder, be something to do with the fact that well-paid auditor and advisor to Black's Ravelston empire is none other than… KPMG?

Rake's progress

AN EVEN more lucrative client for KPMG over the years has been Shell. As revealed in *Eye* 1106, the oil company pays millions each year to KPMG for auditing the company – and even more in consultancy fees.

In his *FT* interview, Mike Rake dismissed the notion that his firm was at fault in signing off accounts showing billions of pounds worth of unproven oil reserves, overstatements that last month cost Shell a £17m fine from the financial services authority (FSA). Auditors cannot "take responsibility for everything", Rake complained.

Doubts over Rake's attempts to distance his firm from the scandal emerged a couple of days later, however, when former Shell chairman Sir Philip Watts filed his objections to the FSA report on the affair. Among the most important was that "the FSA… has failed to take account of the reasonableness of Shell's reliance on the review of reserves information performed by the external auditors".

In other words, Sir Philip alleges that KPMG *did* review the reserves as part of the audits, without raising any concerns. But this would mean Mr Rake was not being entirely straight about KPMG's role in the scandal, which would be at odds with "the highest level of quality, integrity and consistency" he is bringing to the world of accountancy, so it can't be right, can it?

Ethics man

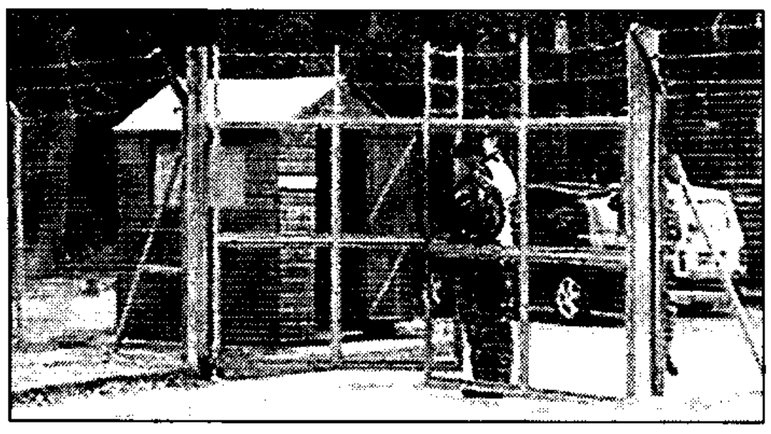
SHELL's other main auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), has dealt with concerns about ethical standards just as pompously as KPMG.

Glyn Barker, in charge of auditing in the UK, has sent every member of staff a copy of the firm's "global code of conduct", with a note explaining that "since events such as Enron and Worldcom, maintaining our reputation is more important than ever".

Mr Barker deftly ignores any "events" (ie accountancy scandals) that his firm has been involved in, such as its role in agreeing dodgy accounts for Geoffrey Robinson's old firm Transtec, for which it was severely criticised by department of trade inspectors last year (see *Eye* 1093).

Fortunately for the firm's partners, who on average earn £500,000 a year, PwC's code of conduct doesn't rule out providing extensive consultancy to audit clients; and nor does it prohibit selling money-spinning tax avoidance schemes. So it's business as usual for the bean-counters.

Continued overleaf ☛



DEEPCUT DEATHS

Ballistic balls-up?

OF THE four suspicious deaths at Deepcut Barracks in Surrey it has always been that of Private Sean Benton, in June 1995, which had least troubled the army and police. The 20-year-old was known to be a suicide risk; and although he died from five separate gunshot wounds, a brief inquest concluded that he had indeed taken his own life.

Officials have since treated it as an open-and-shut case, even though the Benton family has plenty of reasons to be sceptical: key evidence was destroyed; witness statements were contradictory; and the initial investigation was seriously flawed.

Now new doubts have been raised by claims that an official forensic report – never released to the public – concluded that it was impossible for Benton to have fired four of the five shots.

Members of a network of families campaigning over unsolved deaths in the forces claim to have seen parts of studies commissioned by Surrey police in 2002-03 from the Forensic Science Service (FSS) and its German equivalent, the BundesKriminalAmt (BKA). These, it is said, strongly suggest that someone else must have been involved in Benton's death.

Surrey police deny the claim, insisting it "bears no resemblance" to the reports which, they maintain, found no evidence of anything but suicide. But the claim is hardly far-fetched. Last year the independent forensic scientist Frank Swann looked into the Deepcut cases for the families and concluded that three of the shots that killed Benton were fired from several feet away – suggesting someone else must have been involved. The Benton family, naturally concerned about the new "leak", are asking their solicitor to investigate.

The leak comes as the army has confirmed that it has launched a fresh investigation into more abuse claims at the barracks – this time against a sergeant. Although the ministry of defence stresses that the individual under investigation was not at Deepcut when the four deaths occurred, the allegations come only weeks after Leslie Skinner, a former Deepcut instructor, admitted indecently assaulting young soldiers at the base in the 1990s, when two of the deaths did take place.

While 46-year-old Skinner's guilty pleas spared the MoD the embarrassing details of his offences, its failure to protect young soldiers at Deepcut has been vividly exposed. Skinner, it emerged, was posted to his training assignment at Deepcut *after* being court-martialled in Northern Ireland for indecently exposing himself to a 17-year-old boy.

It was the MoD's casual approach to such matters that prompted Surrey police's condemnation of the army's wholesale failure in its "duty of care" to teenage volunteers, who were often away from home for the first time. They were unprotected in an environment where bullying, self-harm and worse had become rife. MPs on the Commons defence select committee have also been appalled to hear evidence that internal reports highlighting these problems were systematically shelved by army top brass. Officers were apparently under political pressure to switch resources from the military "tail", the training and logistics of the kind handled by Deepcut, to the "teeth" – the fighting units in foreign fields. Retired Colonel Richard Haes wrote a detailed report in 2001 saying that training establishments were so badly undermanned, they were breaking several safety and duty-of-care laws.

He admitted to the committee that he was completely unaware at the time that several equally critical studies of these problems had been compiled in previous years, which had simply been ignored, forgotten or not believed.

Whatever the truth behind the Deepcut deaths, unease and suspicion will remain until details of the investigations, including the forensic reports at the centre of the latest claims, are made public.

PRISONS

Bad job

AN inspection report on North Sea Camp prison in Lincolnshire woefully understates how prisoners there are given "inappropriate and unacceptable" work placements.

The prison, part of which is in danger of falling down, houses 300 inmates, many at the end of life sentences, who are sent out to work to help prepare them for release and "resettlement".

Last year one inmate in the 23rd year of a life sentence for the rape of a 13-year-old girl, and with a history of indecent exposure, was sent to work at a settlement for handicapped and vulnerable women called Norton Lees, in nearby Boston.

Here he worked as an unsupervised odd-job man who was also allowed to assist at swimming lessons. Fortunately his work placement passed without incident. But the same cannot be said for the inmate serving life for murder, Paul Baines, who replaced him at the home. He promptly tried to throttle a woman member of staff.

MMR

The last word?

THE latest Medical Research Council study of more than 5,000 UK children has ruled out any link between MMR, the measles, mumps and rubella triple vaccine, and autism. Ministers and health chiefs have pronounced it the most "authoritative" and "comprehensive" study yet and said it should be "the last word in the debate".

Similar things were said two years ago about Danish research into the vaccination history of more than 500,000 children, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. It was also said to show no link. Yet earlier this month two separate reviews of the Danish records, published in the *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*, have come to the opposite conclusion, citing significant *increases* in autism in Denmark since MMR was introduced.

How could the conclusions be so different? Mainly because in Denmark autism is often diagnosed later, at the age of five, and the original Danish paper only tracked the children for four years, thus missing cases.

The first new paper, by American paediatrician Fouad Yazbak, looked at levels of autism from 1980 – six years before the MMR vaccine was introduced – until 2002. It found that autism rates in children aged five to nine were just over 8 per 100,000 in the years before MMR was introduced; but by 2000 it had risen to just over 71 cases per 100,000.

Unlike the new MRC paper, this one received scant attention in the UK press. The *British Medical Journal* said it did not cover the study because it did not know how reliable it was.

The second review, also in the *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*, received little attention either. But then one of its authors was Dr Andrew Wakefield, the controversial gastro-enterologist at the centre of the debate in the UK. His review, with Dr Carol Stott, a Cambridge psychologist and autism expert, showed autism cases in Denmark have increased steadily by 14.8 percent each year since the introduction of MMR. Both studies suggest only some of the increase is accounted for by better and wider diagnosis.

Meanwhile challenges to the assumptions of the MRC's "last word" study have already started. That study looked at the vaccination records of 1,294 children diagnosed with autism, compared them with 4,469 children of a similar sex and age and concluded that "normal" children were as likely to have had the jab as autistic children. The week after it was published in the *Lancet*, delegates gathered in Denmark for the World Autism Organisation's annual conference. Though the MRC paper was not on the agenda, MMR and the shortcomings of epidemiological studies in the debate were.

The first criticism is one that is levelled at epidemiological studies on both sides of the debate. It is said that they lump all autism and pervasive developmental disorder together, which is akin to searching for an increase in a particular type of cancer but including the results for all cancers. No one has ever suggested that MMR is responsible for all autism. The suggestion is that it might be a factor in a sub-group of children with regressive autism and bowel disease.

The MRC study is further undermined, it is claimed, because at the time it was made around 80 percent of those whose records were examined had received the MMR vaccine, making it difficult to evaluate the outcome in sufficient numbers for unvaccinated children. Critics suggest that more children needed to be included in the study.

The Danish conference also heard evidence from Dr Stott, who has been looking specifically at the children involved in the stalled litigation in the UK against the vaccine manufacturers. Although her study so far is very small – just 94 children – and not conclusive, she reported that there may be an association between specific brands of MMR and a particular behavioural presentation in the autistic children, whose onset comes shortly after vaccination and is characterised by severe and pervasive developmental regression and gut disease.

Most, although not all, of the children who were also found to be more likely to have measles virus in their bloods had had the earlier forms of MMR, which were withdrawn because they caused aseptic meningitis. Although those brands of vaccine are no longer on the market, there were still small but significant numbers of children with similar regressive autism who had had the newer vaccines. The researchers had alerted the department of health to their findings back in February this year, suggesting the need for further investigation. So far they have only received an acknowledgement of receipt of their letter.

The debate, then, is far from over. With some scientists relying on population studies and others looking at the children involved in the claims, it is like comparing chalk with cheese and parents are still confused, sceptical and concerned. With uptake of MMR last week reported to be around 80 percent, it is unfortunate that researchers on both sides of the debate cannot work together.

While research to find out what children with autism have in common has all but stopped in Britain, it continues in the US. In particular, scientists and doctors there are looking to see if the findings of vaccine-strain measles virus at the site of the diseased guts of autistic children can be replicated. The results of these studies – which should have been done years ago when Dr Wakefield and others first reported the findings – are expected later this year.

In the City

DO white-collar criminals get off lightly when they get sent to prison – assuming that they do not receive a suspended sentence, which is common in fraud cases? With frauds in the corporate suite and on investors now bigger and badder, does the punishment today fit the bigger crimes?

Certainly that seems the case post-Enron in the United States, where in March even American experts were shocked when tax specialist James Olis, a middle-ranking executive with Enron's smaller rival, Dynegy, was jailed for 24 years over his part in a $300m accounting fraud.

With corporate crime now a big issue because of the millions of investors hit hard by corporate greed and accounts manipulation, judges were expected to come down heavier on guilty suits. But *that* hard? Olis was a first offender and made no personal profit. "Sometimes good people commit bad acts," was the trial judge's unsympathetic response.

Olis had contested the fraud charges so the implications of his sentence are no doubt already being considered by Enron's chief architects Ken Lay and Jeffrey Skilling, plus Bernie Ebbers of WorldCom, who are all awaiting trial. Not to mention John and Timothy Rigas, awaiting sentencing for looting their Adelphia cable TV empire.

Rigas father and son could face 30 years; and under US federal sentencing guidelines, what you get is largely what you serve – unlike in Britain where parole is available after half a sentence has been served. The federal guidelines factor in all relevant or mitigating information, including eligibility for parole. Judges have to sentence within a fairly tight grid measured in months.

Thirty years is believed to be the longest sentence handed out for fraud by a federal judge in recent years. Ponzi scheme mastermind Patrick Bennett was given that in 2000 for costing 12,000 investors $700m. Sentences of more than 20 years also come round every few years. Lance van Alstyne was jailed for 24 years in 2002 after stealing $11m from elderly investors.

But what about in Britain? How hard are fraudsmen punished here, where there are no guidelines and only judges decide the appropriate sentence? Remember the uproar over the community service sentence handed down to conman Roger Levitt in 1993; and the two occasions on which the attorney-general has successfully asked the appeal court to increase lenient sentences given by trial judges involving Michael Ward and last year Stephen Hinchliffe?

A review of sentences in the major cases brought by the Serious Farce Office since 1990 suggests most British judges consider any sentence of more than seven years – the usual maximum laid down for any one fraud/theft offence – requires frauds so vast or victims so numerous that they are all but inconceivable. And as there are no sentencing guidelines, what is serious to one judge can be far less so to another, resulting in inconsistent sentences. Also (unlike in the US), the SFO has no input into sentencing.

So what is the tariff for major fraud in Britain? The longest sentence handed down in recent years was the 14 years received by ship owner Abbas Gokal for helping to plunder hundreds of millions of the Bank of Crooks and Cocaine International's deposits. As BCCI was the world's biggest bank fraud that 1997 sentence might be considered modest, especially as he served just over nine years, despite paying none of the £3m or three more years confiscation order.

Those responsible for bank frauds in the US usually receive much stiffer sentences. Italian Michele Sindona was jailed for 25 years over the collapse of Franklin National Bank in the 1970s. Released to serve his time in Italy, he died from a poisoned espresso before he could tell what he knew about the Mafia and its political associates. Jake Butcher, who brought down several southern banks in the 1980s, was imprisoned for 20 years. Ironically, BCCI's number two man, Swaleh Naqvi, was sentenced to only eight years in New York after serving probably no more than three years of a 14-year sentence in Abu Dhabi.

Apart from Gokal, ten years seems to be the ceiling set by British judges for serious fraud. Peter Clowes, who robbed thousands of elderly investors of £150m, was jailed for 10 back in 1992. Three years later, solicitor Graham Durnford Ford was also jailed for 10 years for stealing £8m of clients' funds. Judges always take a dim view of bent lawyers.

Jail sentences of nine years were also handed down in 1996 for another crooked solicitor, Charles Deacon, who had facilitated a $19m advance fee fraud, and in 1995 for trade finance fraudster Mohammed Naviede. That sentence was later cut to six years on appeal.

But most sentences are much shorter; so the average sentence has been under five years, from which the average time served would in most cases have been 20 to 30 months. Still, it would appear to have somewhat increased from the pre-SFO period. A sign perhaps that fraud is taken more seriously now.

Research by leading criminologist Professor Michael Levi back in 1989 discovered that in 1987, the year before the SFO came into being, most defendants charged with fraud were jailed for two to three years. Only 19 received sentences of more than four years.

In 1995-96, the average sentence in SFO cases was 4.3 years. Since then the highest sentence in all but three years has been seven or eight years. In 1999-2000 it was four years and for the past two years the toughest sentence has been six years. Which suggests that the average is still four to five years – so perhaps twice the level pre-SFO.

Whether this is a deterrent seems unlikely given the rewards and chances of conviction. Especially given the SFO's recent poor run of results with just seven convictions out of 23 defendants so far this year. A more realistic picture is presented by the life-time totals for the SFO which show 414 of 611 defendants convicted since 1988 – a batting average of 68 percent. But that figure drops substantially when guilty pleas are deducted.

Still it is hard to see an American judge finding that only six years fitted a £100m-plus crime as in the case of the Versailles trade finance fraud. Perhaps along with all the talk about removing juries from fraud trials and introducing a general offence of fraud, there should also be a fraud grid within which judges can sentence to take greater account of the amounts stolen or lost and the number of victims rather than leaving the sentence to the whim of judges who may be overly influenced by the first offender whose life has been ruined and whose family have been shattered.

LOOT! by 'Bruin'

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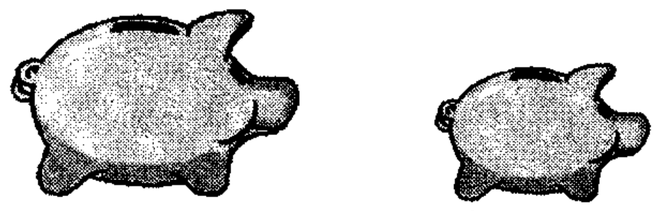

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Average employee's salary

ONE of the SFO's more embarrassing recent setbacks was the own-goal scored with accused advance fee fraudster Martin Tobias-Gibbins and his four co-defendants, including three lawyers.

The trial had to be stopped after it was inadvertently disclosed, initially by the SFO case controller, that Gibbins was registered as an informant with the City police. This information was circulated to defence barristers among other disclosable material, instead of being treated as confidential.

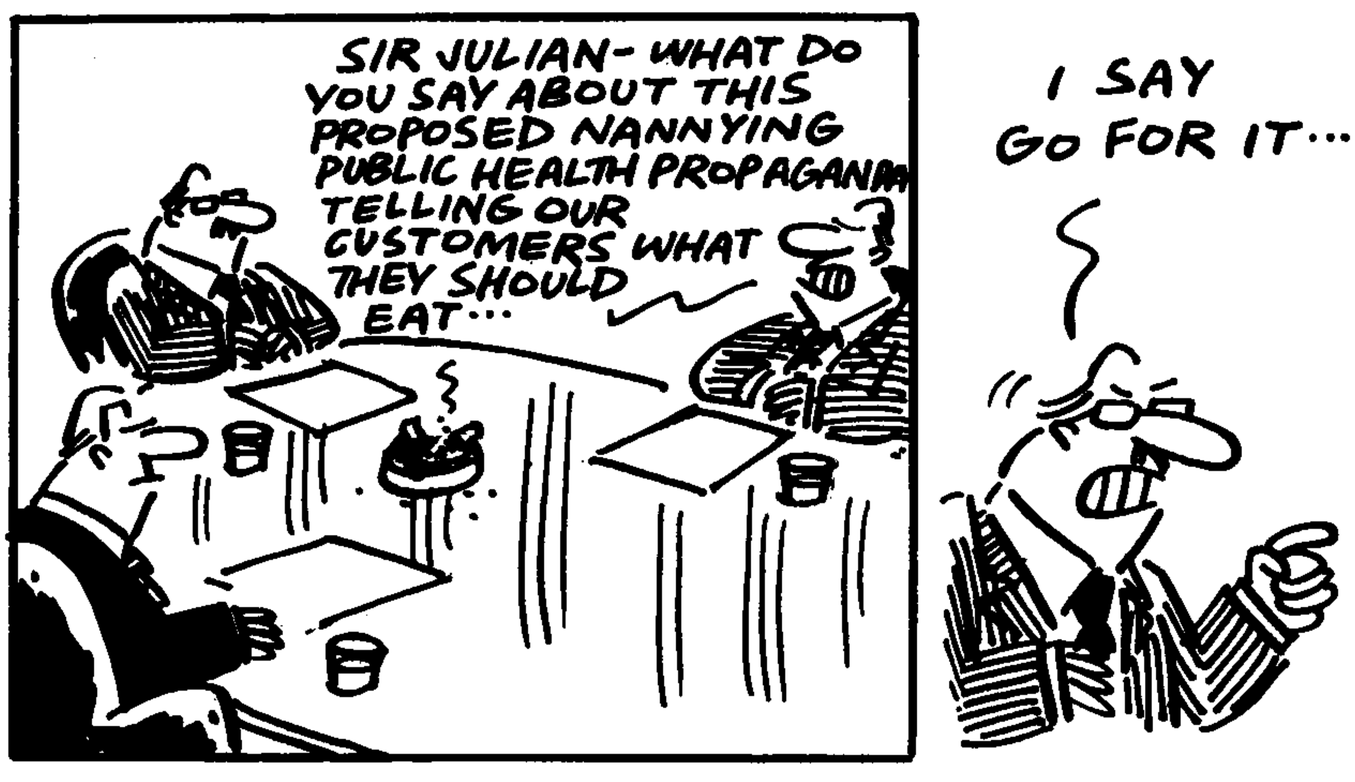
Attempts by the prosecution to keep this information secret, even from the defendants, were opposed by some defence lawyers and rejected by the appeal court which over-ruled the trial judge. Normally such matters are handled by way of public interest immunity certificates and the world both inside and outside the court is none the wiser.

As a result, the case against the four others was dropped in June; and then the following month the trial judge decided the case against Gibbins could not proceed. The cost of this fiasco is put at more

Continued overleaf... ☛

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG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176.

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...Ronald Reagan	+39%
...George Bush, Sr	+67%
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...George "W." Bush	–16%

than £10m. The Scotland Yard investigation had begun in 1999. Gibbins was charged in 2002.

The nature of Gibbins' relationship with the City police came as a surprise given that he has been known for several years to be active in the invariably fraudulent high-yield investment sphere. His name popped up in the Salvation Army scam. Gibbins was said to have been particularly close to a senior City detective who on one occasion turned out to be his get out of jail card.

Just how fortunate Gibbins may have been but for the SFO's embarrassing and expensive mistake is illustrated by an earlier appeal court hearing in the case, regarding whether a trial should include documents that passed between him and his Mayfair solicitor and co-defendant, Michael Wilson-Smith.

In ruling that the evidence should be made public, the appeal court outlined the prosecution case against Gibbins and his co-defendants who had specialised in offering supposed "access to funds agreements". Offshore companies connected to Gibbins agreed to produce a so-called "proof of funds letter" or "bank advice" as evidence of funds against which investors were supposed to raise money to invest in high-yield investment programmes. Investors were told that more than $100m was available in a Paris bank for trading in old favourites of the high-yield scams, such as prime bank guarantees.

The investors paid a fee into an escrow account operated by one of Gibbins' lawyer accomplices once the worthless bank documents agreements were signed. This fee was payable to Gibbins out of the escrow account regardless of whether any money was obtained. So too were fat legal fees. In 1996 Wilson-Smith admitted in instruction to counsel that: "Instructing solicitors are concerned as to the possibility of it being said that taken as a whole the business is fraudulent by reason of none of the contracting parties in any of the agreements having in practice been able to perform by delivery of the bank instruments."

Between 1994 and 2000 almost 90 victims from around the world entered into agreements with Gibbins, paid their fees and received nothing back. "In no instance was access to the specified sum actually obtained," recorded Lord Justice Potter. "All the investors got for their money was the bank advice and/or the pre-advice which documents were of no commercial value." The SFO case was that Gibbins and the lawyers knew the conditions they set for raising the finance could not be met so the scheme was dishonest. This was denied by all the defendants.

The three solicitors who participated with Gibbins in this sham – which involved up to £30m – had their practices taken over in 1999 and 2000 by the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors. The Law Society is said not to be best pleased by the collapse of the case.

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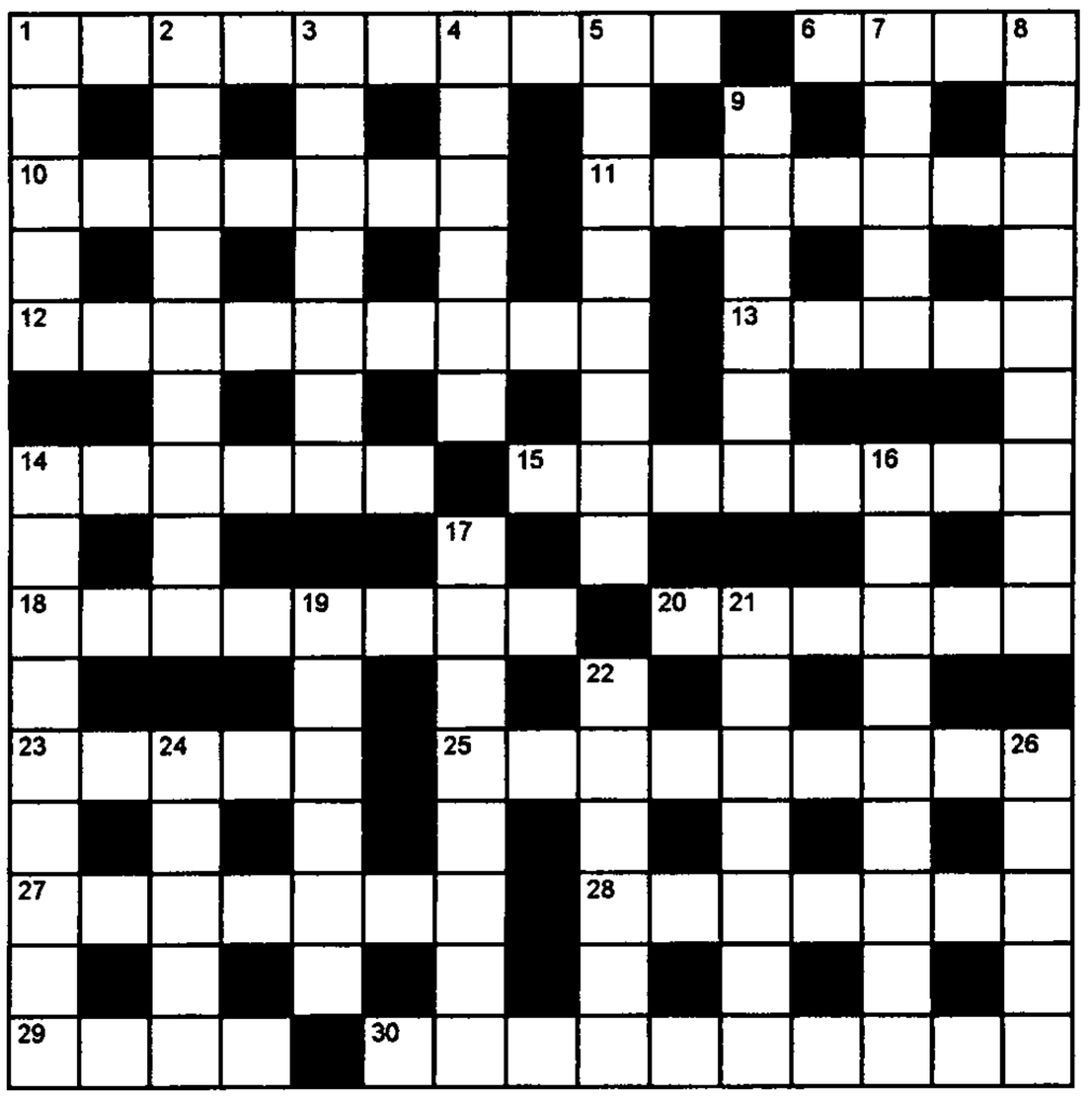


ACROSS

1 A dabbler in Euro-politics to almost top Hattersley's type (6-4)
6 Jack off to boast "Getting rid of leader!" (4)
10 Re-emerged novelist's career to bite the dust? (7)
11 I'm Tone's equivalent of "wet" (7)
12 Piece by hack: "Stuck in Looney Bin"? (9)
13 See 4 Down
14 UK king to be covered in tea when horseplay takes place (6)
15 'Mush', school whisky gets lowest possible mark? (8)
18 Close to organ having bad smell – leave (5,3)
20 Felt good, being tied up (6)
23 Brief return to normal life, eh – in grasp of flipping lawyers (5)
25 Locates MP pissed from the stuff of spirits (9)
27 Spirit of Left missing from deceitful Blair – cad! (7)
28 Just a touch by 1960s gang member and I have a vulgar orgasm (7)
29 Food: Victoria needs a new start (4)
30 Self-regarding Coldstream Guards initially involved with erection (10)

DOWN

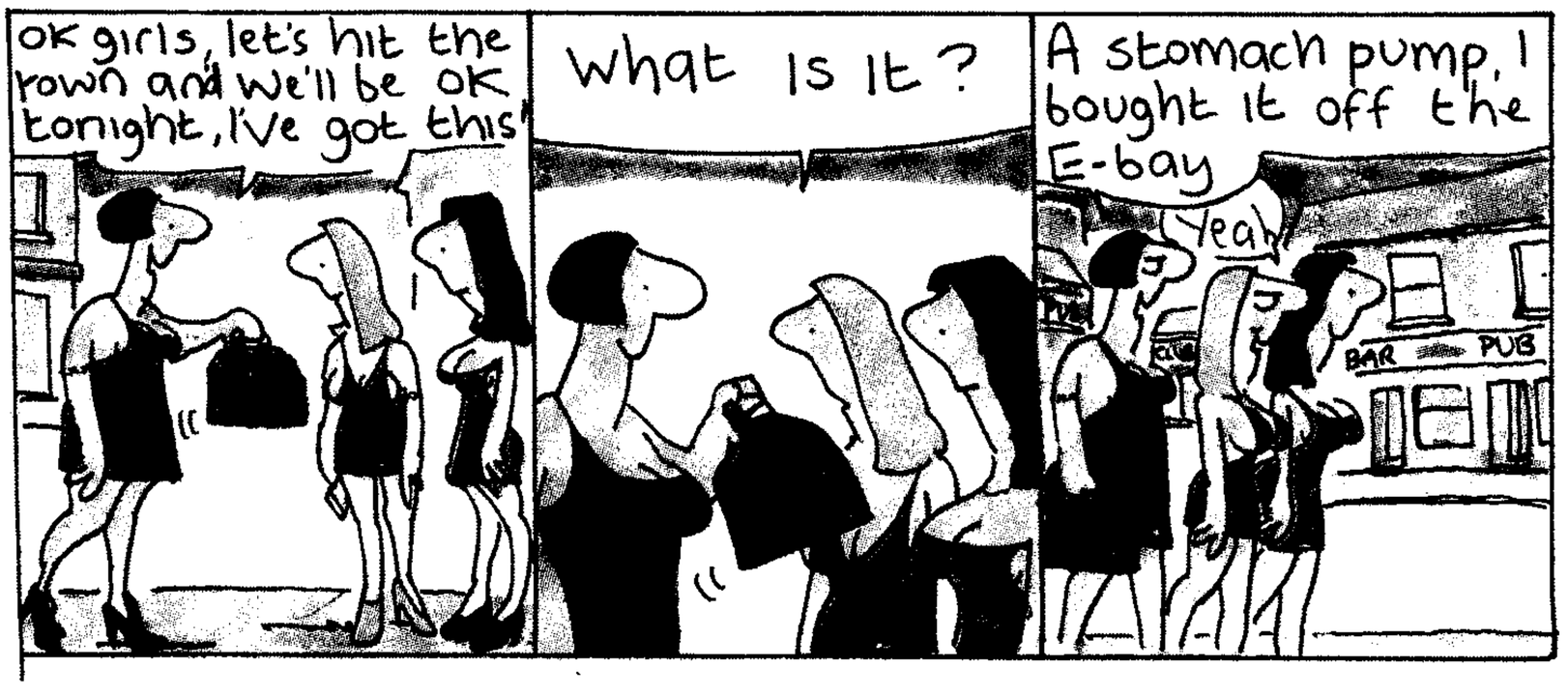
1 Saddam victims' way to take part in UK's destruction (5)
2 A clue: toss off but it's a hopeless exercise (4,5)
3 A bad force is the result of decrepit cop-shop (3,4)
4/13 Dazed having been seriously bonked? (6,5)
5 Scoring ability gone, Waddle joins *Eye* (4,4)
7 Somewhat castrated – hardly a 'penis extension'! (5)
8 Like some fags of Elvis's build? (4-5)
9 Chinese food's thick – problem (3,3)
14 Bird's nickname for Cook? (4,5)
16 Overtake one on the ballroom floor and she'll land on genital area (3,6)
17 Dicky mounts Brenda (Cyclops no good) as a sacrifice (8)
19 Right boner needing release (benefiting from recreation?) (6)
21 Persuaded to make up the numbers for a bondage session? (5,2)
22 One half Blair, threequarters Hucknall – having explosive potential (6)
24 Beats topless journalists (5)
26 Twice, Cyclops is overcome by leader of Conservatives, ludicrous imitator (5)

Crossword 270 winner: RONNIE SLOAN

ACROSS: 1 Colemanballs 8 Henman 9 Castrato 10 Lobbyist 11 Heston 12 Flab 13 Fellating 16 Skinflick 18 Army 20 Angora 22 Commoner 24 Eichmann 25 Gaiety 26 Jeremy Paxman.

DOWN: 1 Credo 2 Lame brain 3 Minnie 4 Necktie 5 Arsehole 6 Lords 7 Attorney 12 Faking it 14 Terrorism 15 Cleavage 17 Cockney 19 Smegma 21 Ochre 23 Elton.

HUSBAND



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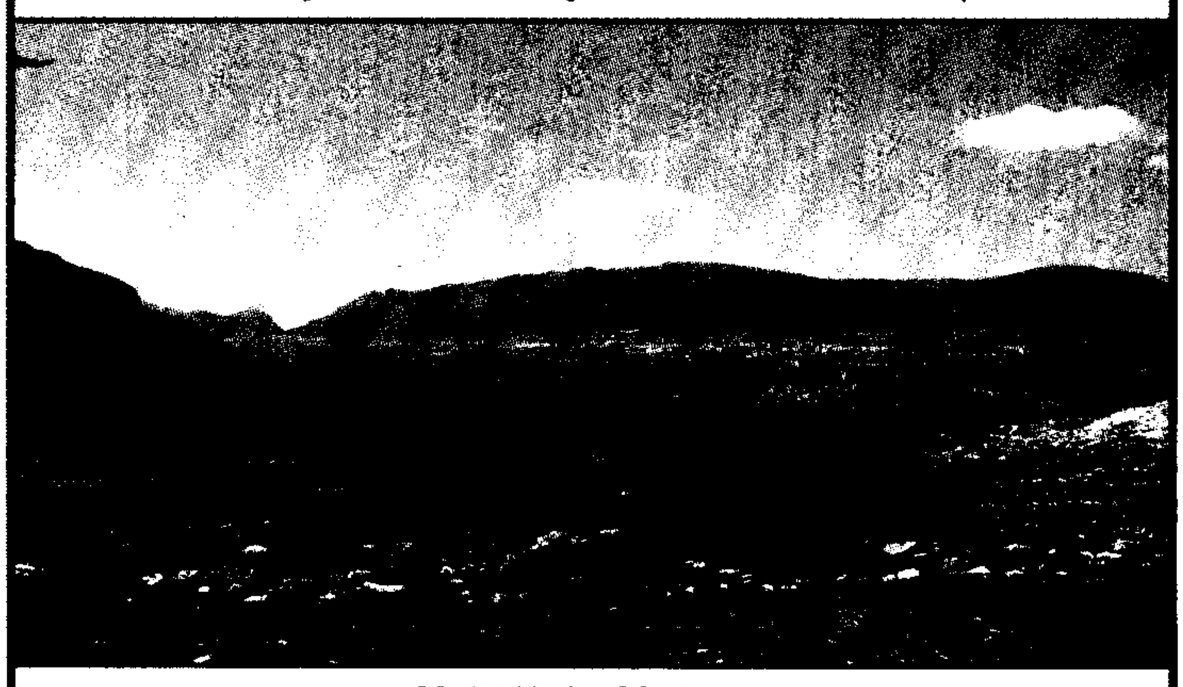

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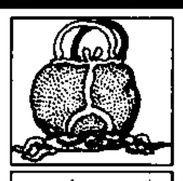

A selection of cartoons, illustrations and animated cels can be found on the **Cartoon Gallery Website**, from **Chris Riddell** to **Steve Bell, Alex** to **Appleby, Honeysett** to **Husband** and **McLachlan** to **Matt.**

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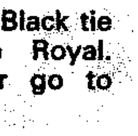

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Day 6 ◆ In Warsaw

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Day 11 ◆ In Krakow

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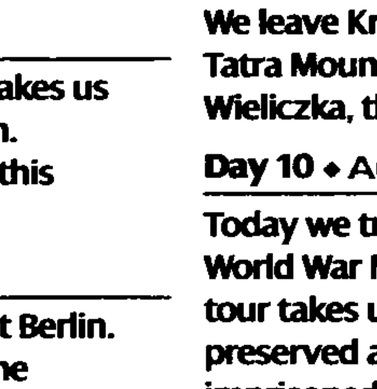
Day 12 ◆ To Berlin



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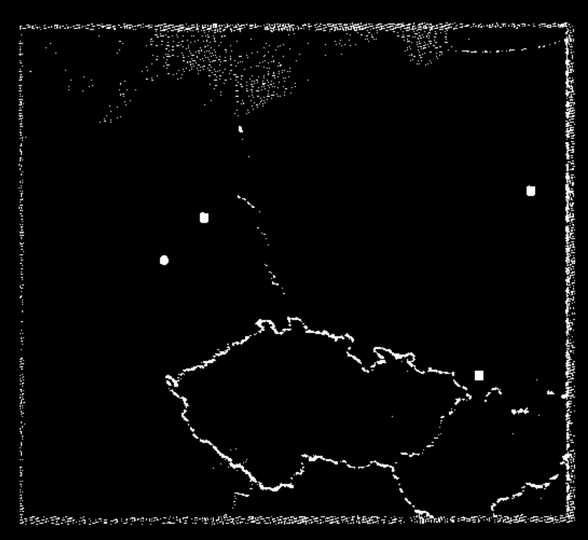

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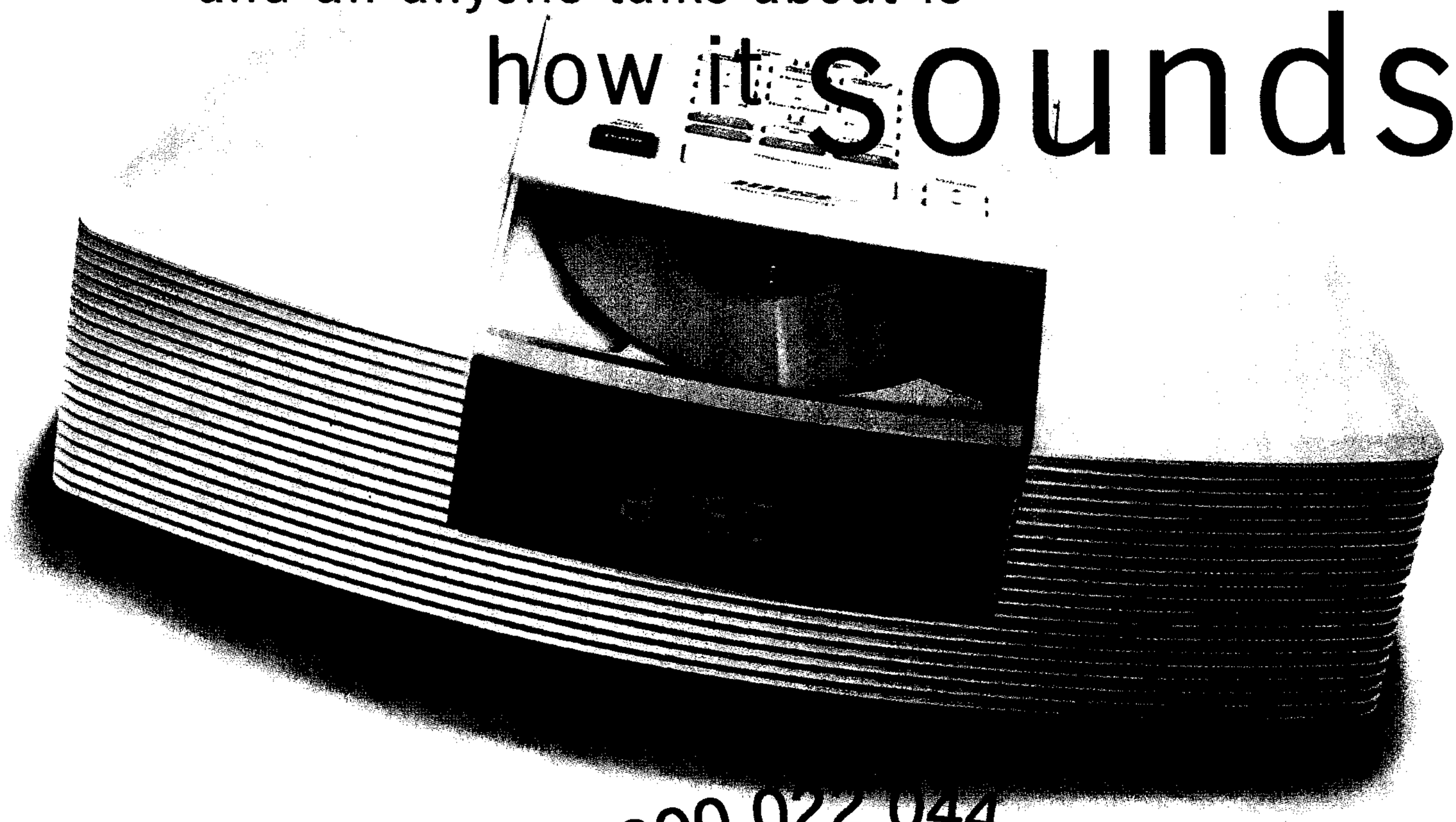

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